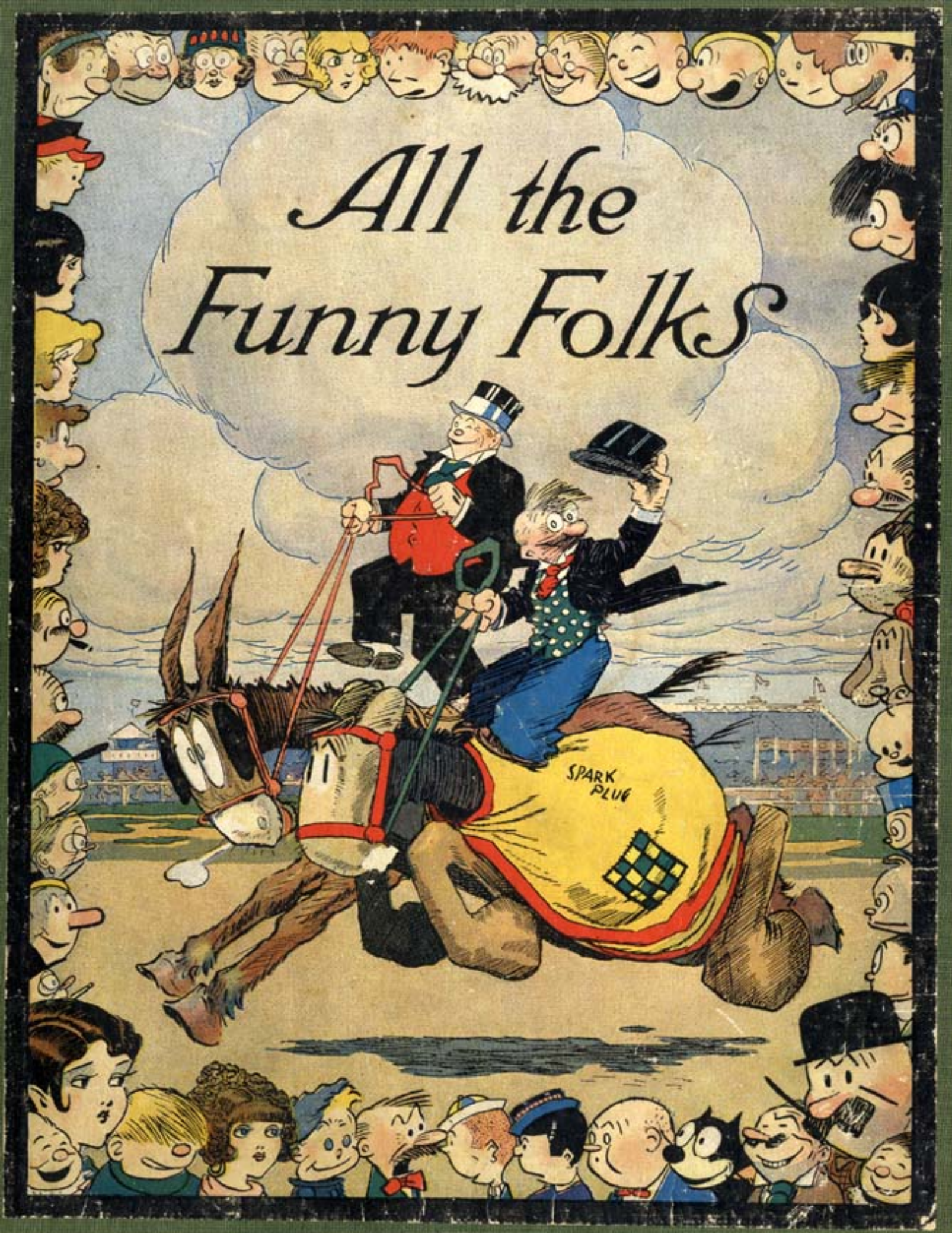
All the
Funny Folks
SPARK
PLUG

ALL THE FUNNY FOLKS

TO YOU

—the kids of any ages
Who read and love the funny pages,
To you, in every happy home,
We dedicate this playful tome,
And hope if you are ever blue
'Twill bring a ray of cheer

TO YOU

"I saw them caper as they never did in the Sunday paper"

ALL THE FUNNY FOLKS

The Wonder Tale of How the Comic-Strip Characters Live and Love "Behind the Scenes."

NEW YORK

THE WORLD TODAY, INC.

From the comic character-creations

by

GEORGE McMANUS BILLY DeBECK CLIFF STERRETT

HARRY HERSHFIELD WALTER HOBAN JAMES SWINNERTON GEORGE HERRIMAN

FREDERICK BURR OPPER H. H. KNERR JEAN KNOTT

TOM McNAMARA PAUL ARNOT FRED FABER CARL E. SCHULTZE

THOMAS A. DORGAN (TAD) REUBEN L. GOLDBERG TOM POWERS

JAMES E. MURPHY RUSS WESTOVER JACK CALLAHAN PAT SULLIVAN

AD CARTER E. C. SEGAR CHARLES McMANUS

LARRY WHITTINGTON DOT COCHRANE E. VERDIER H. C. WEAGAND

WALLACE BISHOP AMRAN SCHEINFELD PAUL FUNG

P. E. SUMNER WESLEY C. MORSE QUIN HALL CHESTER GOULD

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ZERE

The Rhyme-Story By JACK LAIT *The Illustrations* By LOUIS BIEDERMANN

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CHARACTERS OF THE STORY

Famous in the Land of Fun

Jiggs

Maggie

Jiggs' Daughter

Dinty Moore

Tillie the Toiler

Mac

Krazy Kat

Offissa Pupp

Barney Google

Spark Plug

Sunshine

Rudy

Pa Perkins

Ashur

Ignatz

Happy Hooligan

Der Captain

Ma Katzenjammer

Hans

Fritz

Abe Kabibble

Rheba Mine Gold

Minsk

Suzanne

Maud

Si Perkins

Gloomy Gus

Dumb Dora

Boob McNutt

Shrimp Flynn

Skinny Shaner

Little Jimmy

Beans

Violet

Freddie the Sheik

Mr. Applesauce

Nemo

Toots

Casper

Detective Owl Eye

Gussie

Gus

and others

The Newlyweds

Ham Gravy

Olive Oyl

Horace Waffle

Kitty Waffle

Elmer Tuggle

Jerry

Helpful Henry

Slim Pickens

CHAPTER ONE

"List to this tale of the Funny Folks"

CHAPTER ONE

The Great Feast

List to this tale of the funny folks,
Heroes of all our funny jokes,
Famous because of the merry quips,
In those perfectly killing comic strips.

Some are human and some are weird,
But this I swear by Der Captain's beard:
I saw them all in one wild dream
('Cause I drank my coffee without the cream.)

And I saw them cut up and saw them caper
As they never did in the Sunday paper.
For you know, these folks, when their work is done
Must have their nights of fights and fun.
And sometimes 'tis with aching hearts
They play their ink-on-paper parts.
So listen well while I unfold
The strangest story ever told;

Of how a race was engineered,
Greater than any Paul Revered
Since Ben Hur's chariot rumbled in
Amidst the Roman roar and din.

A race twixt Si's old pesky mule,
Our hee-haw Maud, that kicking fool,
And Barney Google's brown-eyed streak,
That blanketed blankety-blank-blank freak,

Old Spark Plug. And the precious prize
Was more than gold in Happy's eyes
For if Maud lost, the fair Suzanne
Was won as Mrs. Hooligan.

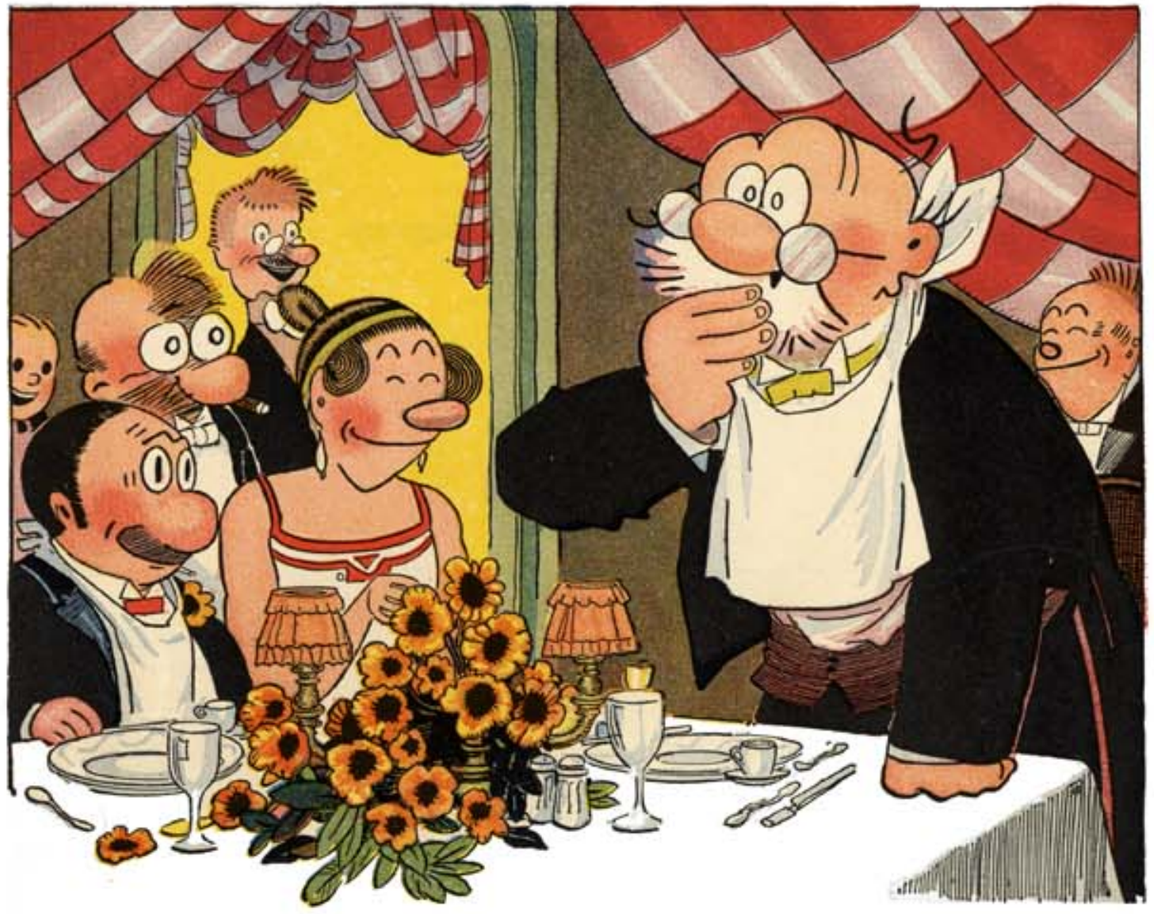
* * *

In the Land of Fun 'twas a night of feast!
Man, woman, child, bird, mouse and beast
Were gathered 'round the groaning board,
A hungry, sundry, friendly horde.

Paw Perkins, Nestor of the group,
Arose between the fish and soup,
And said, "I rise and point with pride
To one who soon will be a bride."

All turned and looked, a murmur ran—
His finger pointed at Suzanne!
Some gasped in sudden shocked surprise.

"In the Land of Fun 'twas a night of feast"



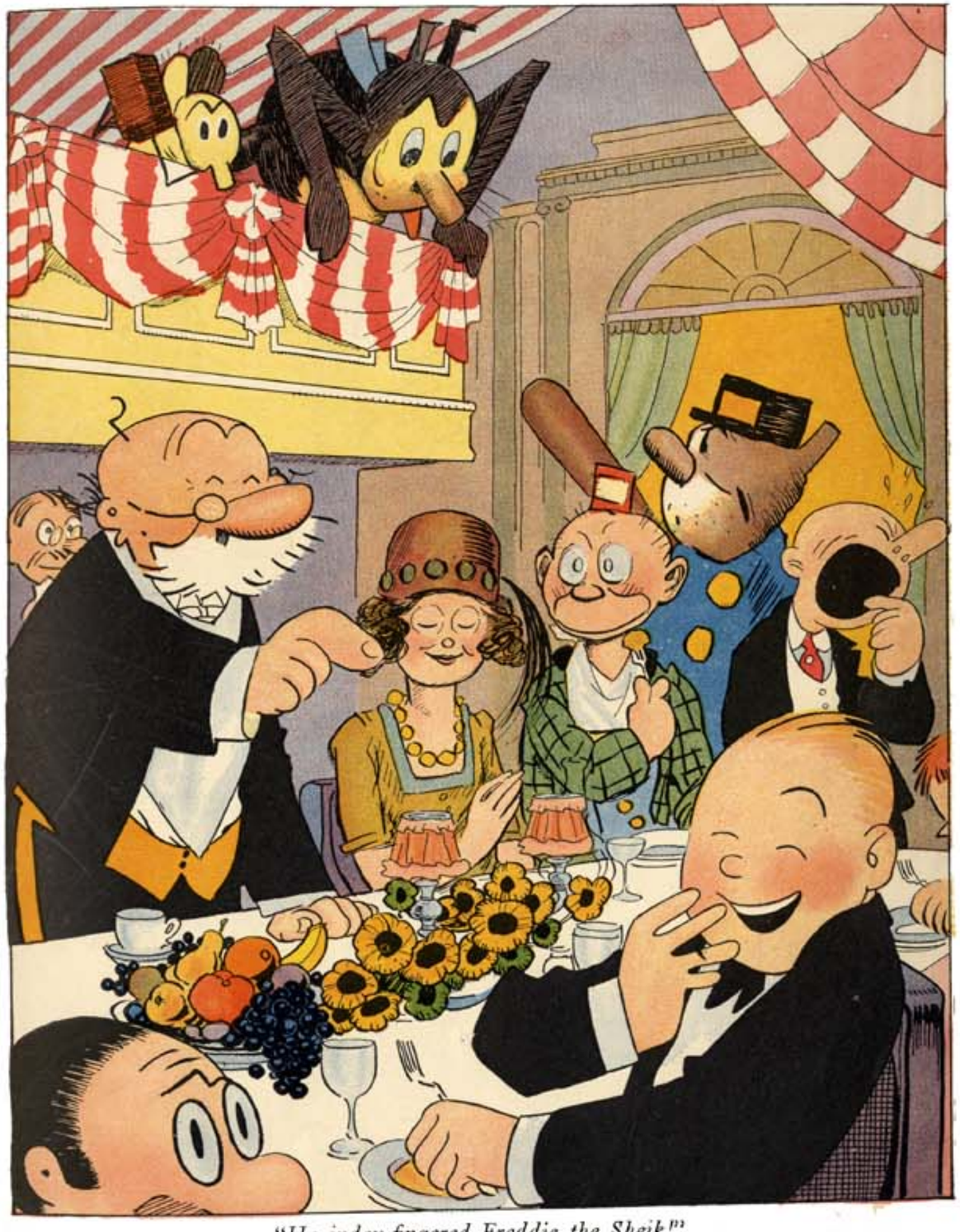
"Paw Perkins, Nestor of the group"

Some, still in doubt, just rubbed their eyes.

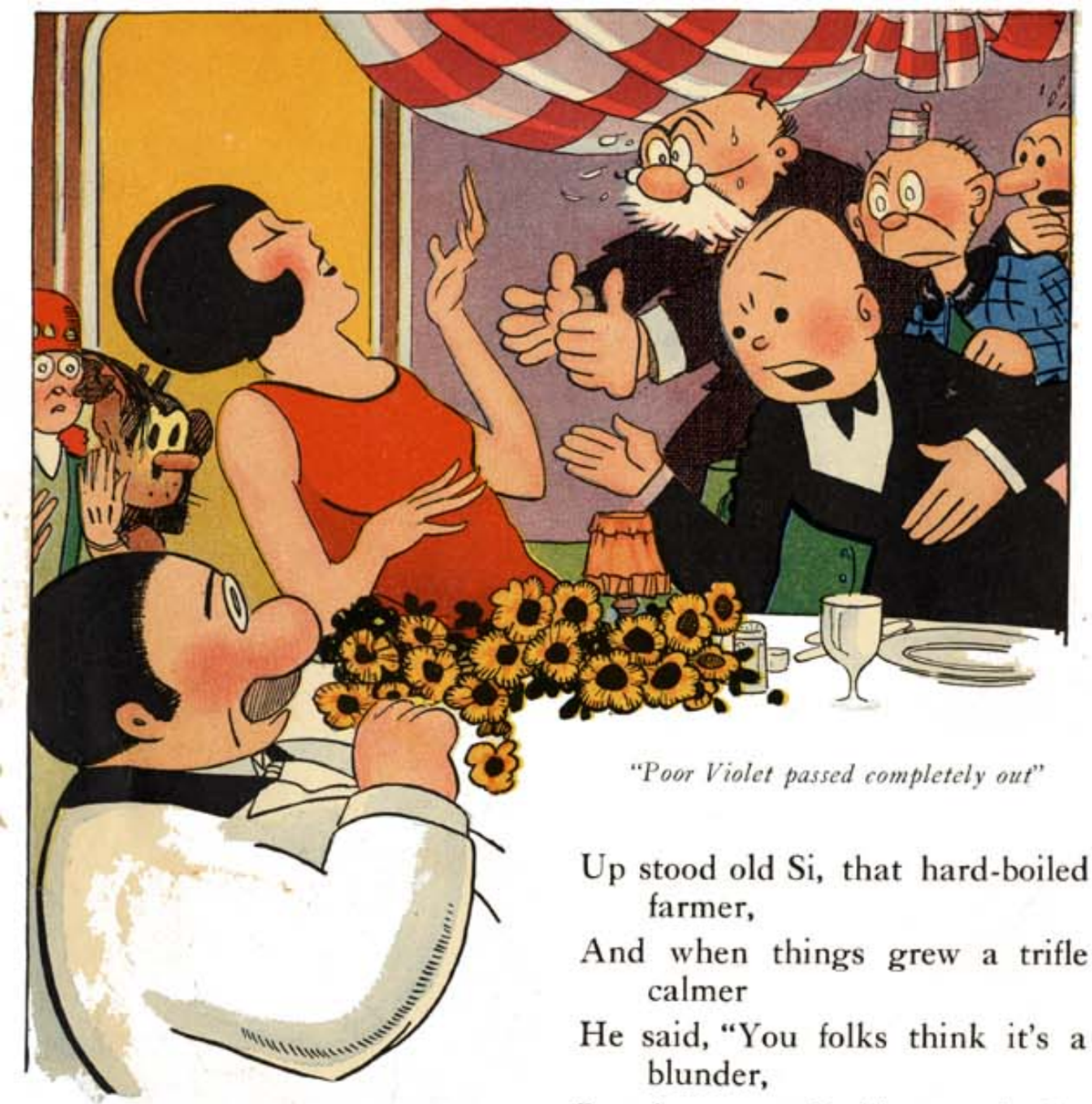
From lovesick Happy came a groan,
Hamgravy choked on a chicken-bone,
While Krazy Kat with back humped up
Made a nasty face at Offisa Pup.

Suzanne, like one caught stealing sheep,
Blushed, blanched, and then began to weep.
While whispers whisped about the room:
"I wonder who's to be the groom!"

Paw raised his hand and struck a pose
With glasses far down on his nose,
And cleared his throat but didn't speak—
He index-fingered Freddie the Sheik!



"He index-fingered Freddie the Sheik!"



"Poor Violet passed completely out"

No bomb let off by Hans and Fritz
Had ever scored as many hits.
With one wild, weird soprano shout
Poor Violet passed completely out.

Up stood old Si, that hard-boiled farmer,
And when things grew a trifle calmer
He said, "You folks think it's a blunder,
But I arranged this match, by thunder.

"I'm sick and tired of Bonehead Happy,
So I took action and made it snappy—

Suzanne ain't gettin' any younger,
So to 'er senses I have brung 'er.

"And whereas Violet an' Freddie
Got nowhere, though they courted steady,
I told the Sheik that if he'd take 'er
I'd give Suzanne a goodly acre.

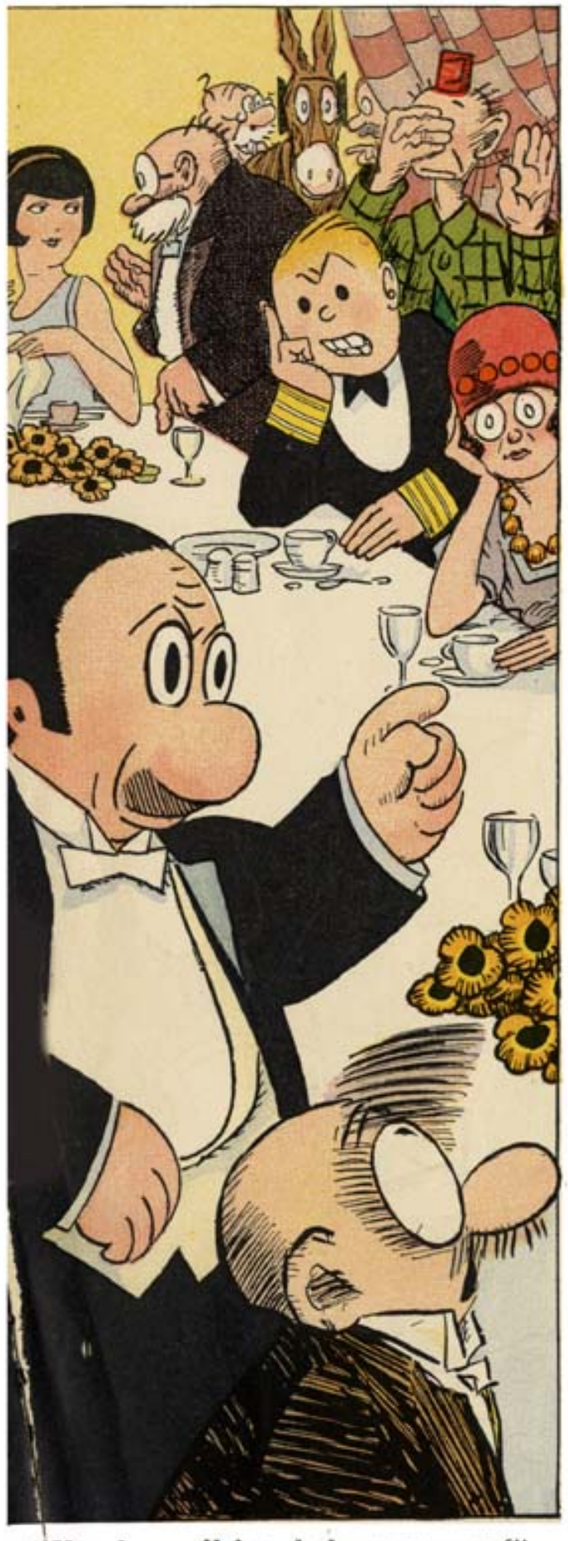
"An' just as an added weddin' pleasure
I'd throw in Maud, too, for good measure.

And I ask all in this big, wide room
To drink a toast to bride and bridegroom."

* * *

Amid the buzz and the tut-tutting—hist!
Down on the table banged a pudgy fist,
And as they turned to see
The whole five-feet-and-three
Of Abe Kabibble, orator,
Called for a hearing, took the floor.

"I'd throw in Maud, too, for good measure"



"You have all heard the news—yes?"

And Abe Kabibble said:

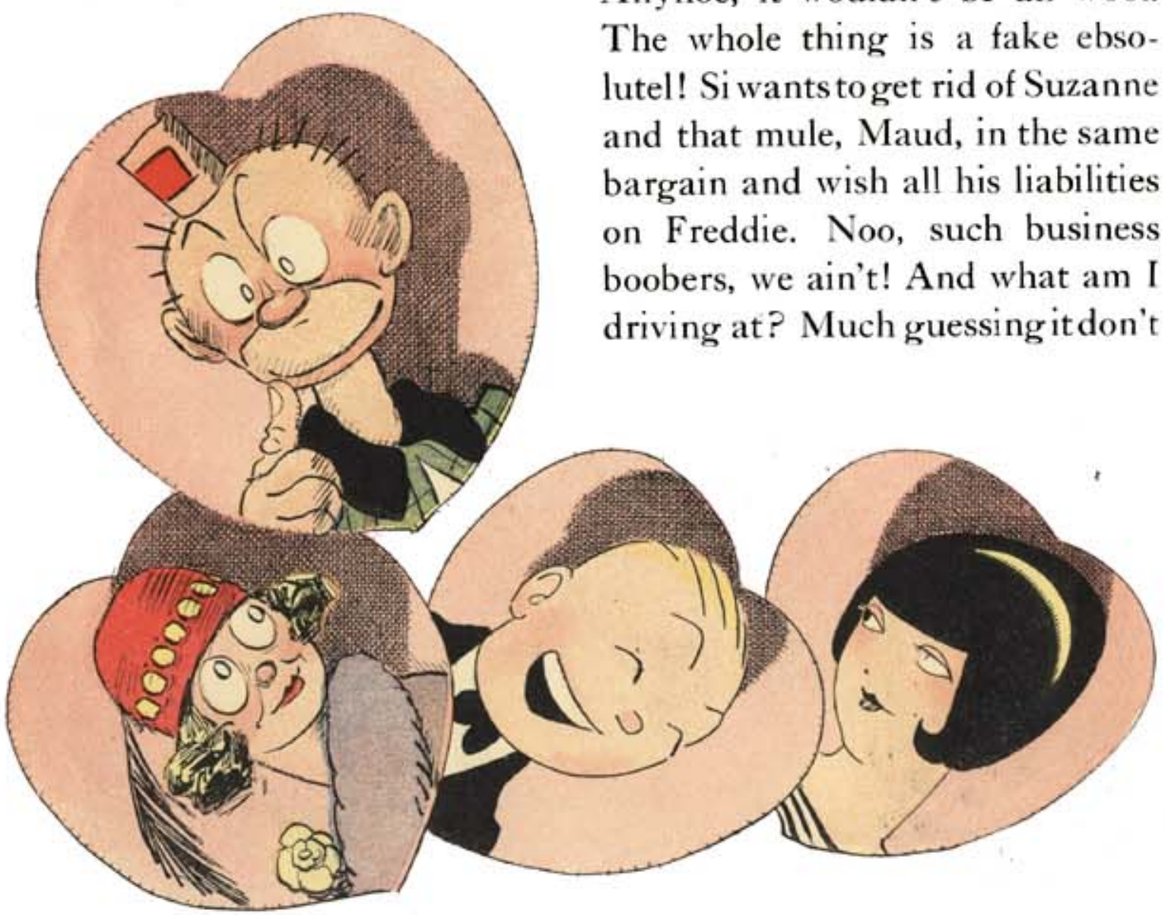
"Fellow Brother Members from this Lodge—you have all heard the news—yes? And I am positivel positive that it hendled you just as big a shock as it hendled me!

"Brother Happy Hooligan is a Brother member of ours—even better—he's a paid up life member—and he's in terrible distress!

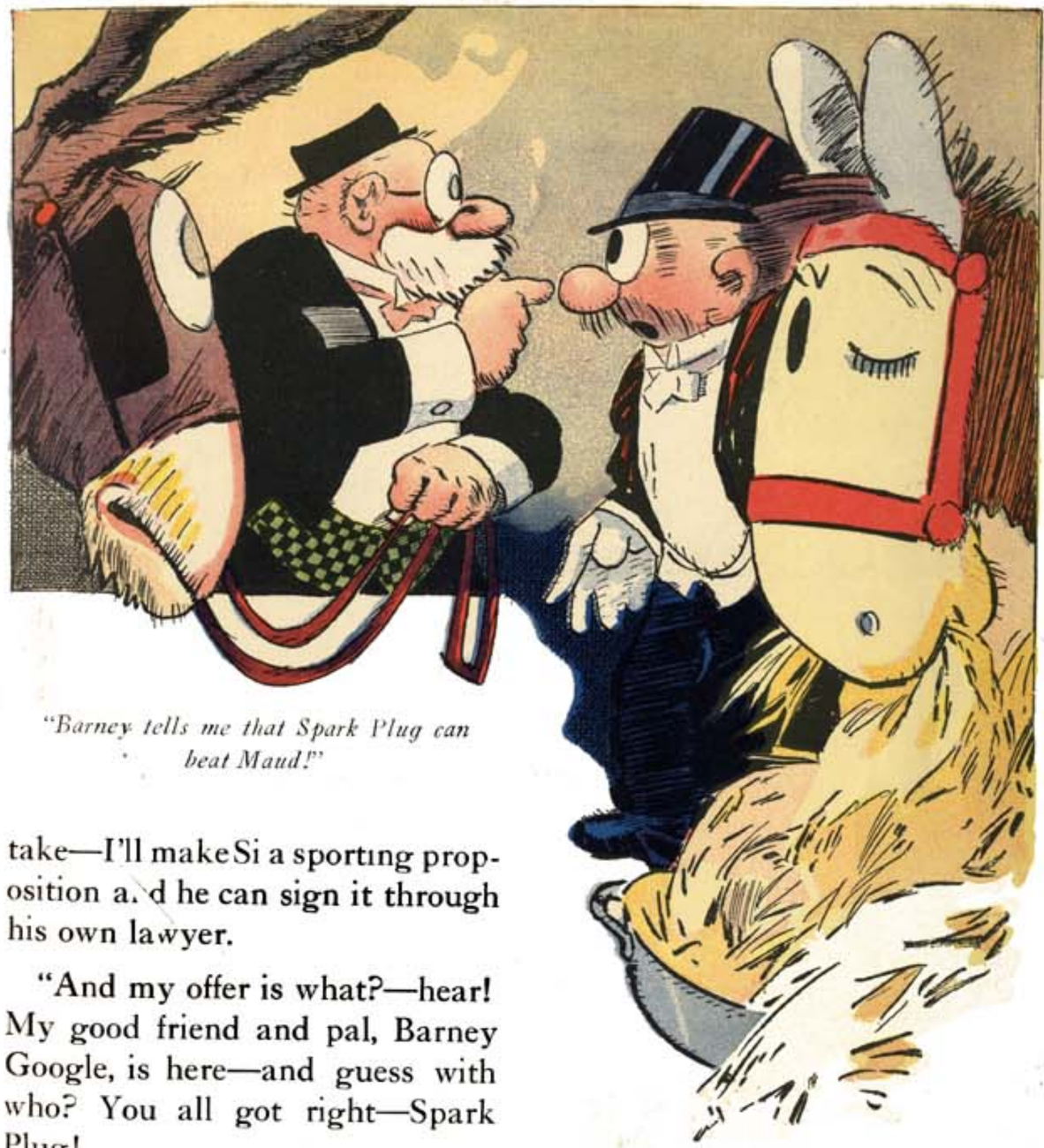
"And such a distress—they are trying to grab away from him his sweetheart Suzanne. I'm asking you—is it right? A thing like that shouldn't even be asked, it's so foolish! Happy loves Suzanne and Suzzie wants to go housekeeping, too! Again I'm asking you, Brothers, what right or license has this Si feller got arrange matches? Marriages are made in Heaven—or do you believe in giving credit where credit is due? As far as that's concerned, Complex automobiles are made in Detroit, but they go to pieces all over! Excuse me, in my excitement. I am getting away from the point.

"Brother Happy Hooligan—he's in terrible distress!"

"Take this Freddie, the Sheik. He is in love with Violet and does Violet return the compliment? Oy, is she cookoo over that Sheiker—and HOW! Anyhoe, it begins to look like sadness is commencing. Four loving hearts, from four nice dumbbells, is going to be mixed up in a hash. And they are all members of our lodge. Are we going to stand for it? Are we Men odder are we ignominious Ignatz mices? Are we going to help them—did we say no? It don't hurt to talk a little good business. And good business is sense! If Si really means it for Happy to have happiness with Suzanne, would he throw in Maud, a mule, mind you, for a wedding present? Is this a romance odder a rummage sale? Don't let him pull the wool over our eyes. Anyhoe, it wouldn't be all wool. The whole thing is a fake ebsolutel! Si wants to get rid of Suzanne and that mule, Maud, in the same bargain and wish all his liabilities on Freddie. Noo, such business boobers, we ain't! And what am I driving at? Much guessing it don't



"Four loving hearts is going to be mixed up in a hash"



"Barney tells me that Spark Plug can beat Maud!"

take—I'll make Si a sporting proposition and he can sign it through his own lawyer.

"And my offer is what?—hear! My good friend and pal, Barney Google, is here—and guess with who? You all got right—Spark Plug!

"Now, Si got a idea in his phooy head that his mule, Maud, is the fastest thing on four legs. Again, members, we ain't such fools! Barney tells me that he will bet his plug hat, a thirty-day note, or if necessary, actual cash, that Spark Plug can beat Maud!

"I am suggesting a race"

"So, members, you gather from my speaking, that I am suggesting a race!

"If Maud, the mule, wins, Si wins!

"If Sparky wins, Happy wins!

"Now, I am asking you—do we or don't we?"

* * *

A vigorous slapping of hands that were clapping,
Applause tore the air. With a cry "Abe—you're there!"—
And with a voice like a bugle, up spake Barney Google:

* * *

"Friends, Rummies, Landoffunners.

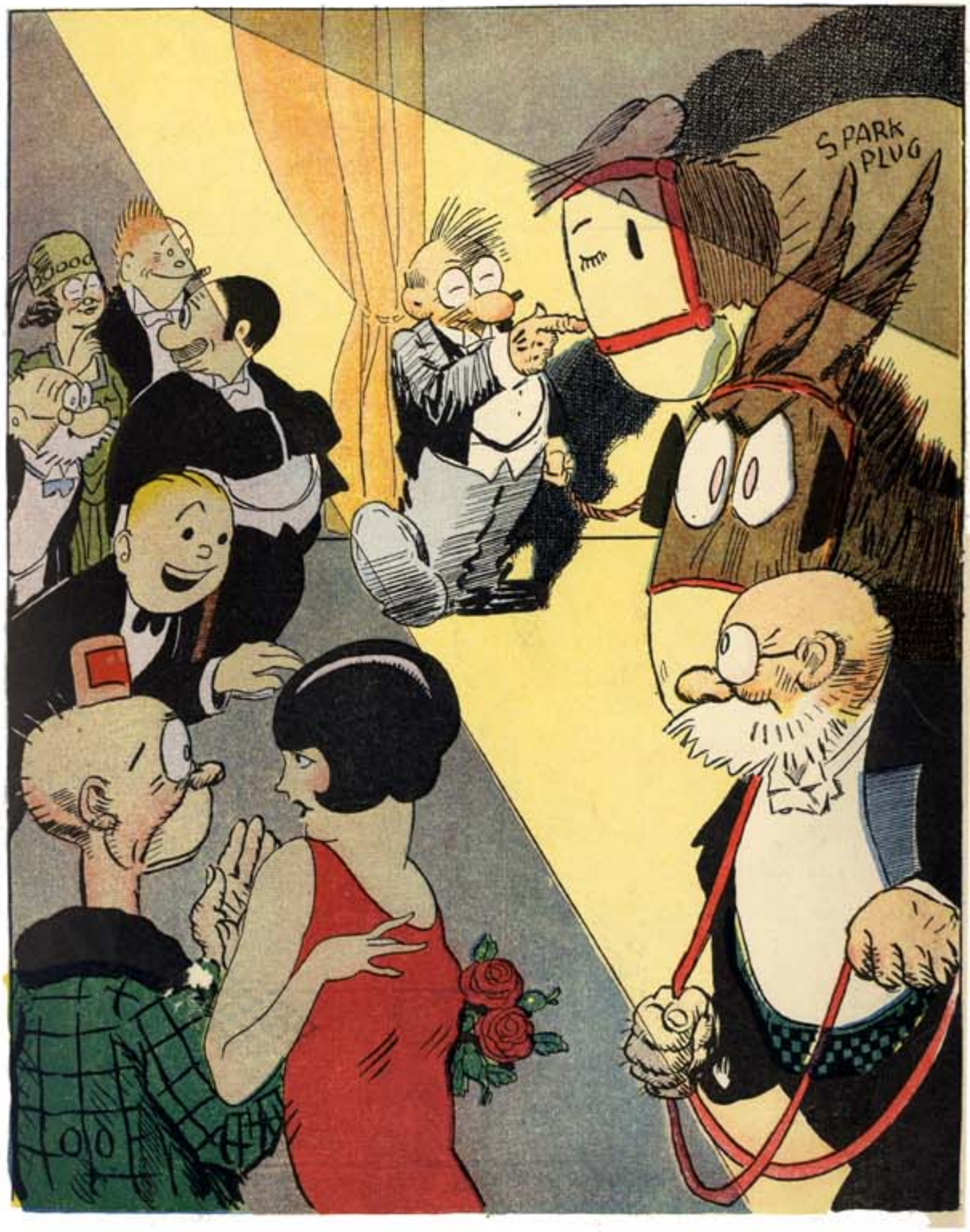
"You heard him. And he spilled a lungful. Papa's brown-eyed Sparky-baby will run that long-eared hoofer, Maud, any time, any place, and run her bowlegged.

"What Happy wants to get married for, I don't know.

"But, if he does, it's as good as done if it depends on the race proposed by my buddy, Abe Kabibble, who is a true sporting man—he wanted a race for Happy, he furnishing the idea and I furnishing the horse.

"With sunshine overhead and Sunshine on his back, with a stake like this and competition like that my Sparky will make Nurmi look like he was anchored. Bring on your mule, Si, if you've got any red

"Applause tore the air"



"Up spake Barney Google"

blood in your old carcass—bring her on if you think she can run, and see running what's running.

"Do I hear anything?"

* * *

Did he? He heard a roar of loud huzzahs,

He heard the cheering and hurrahs,

And Spark Plug, at the demonstration, neighed, "I accept the nomination."

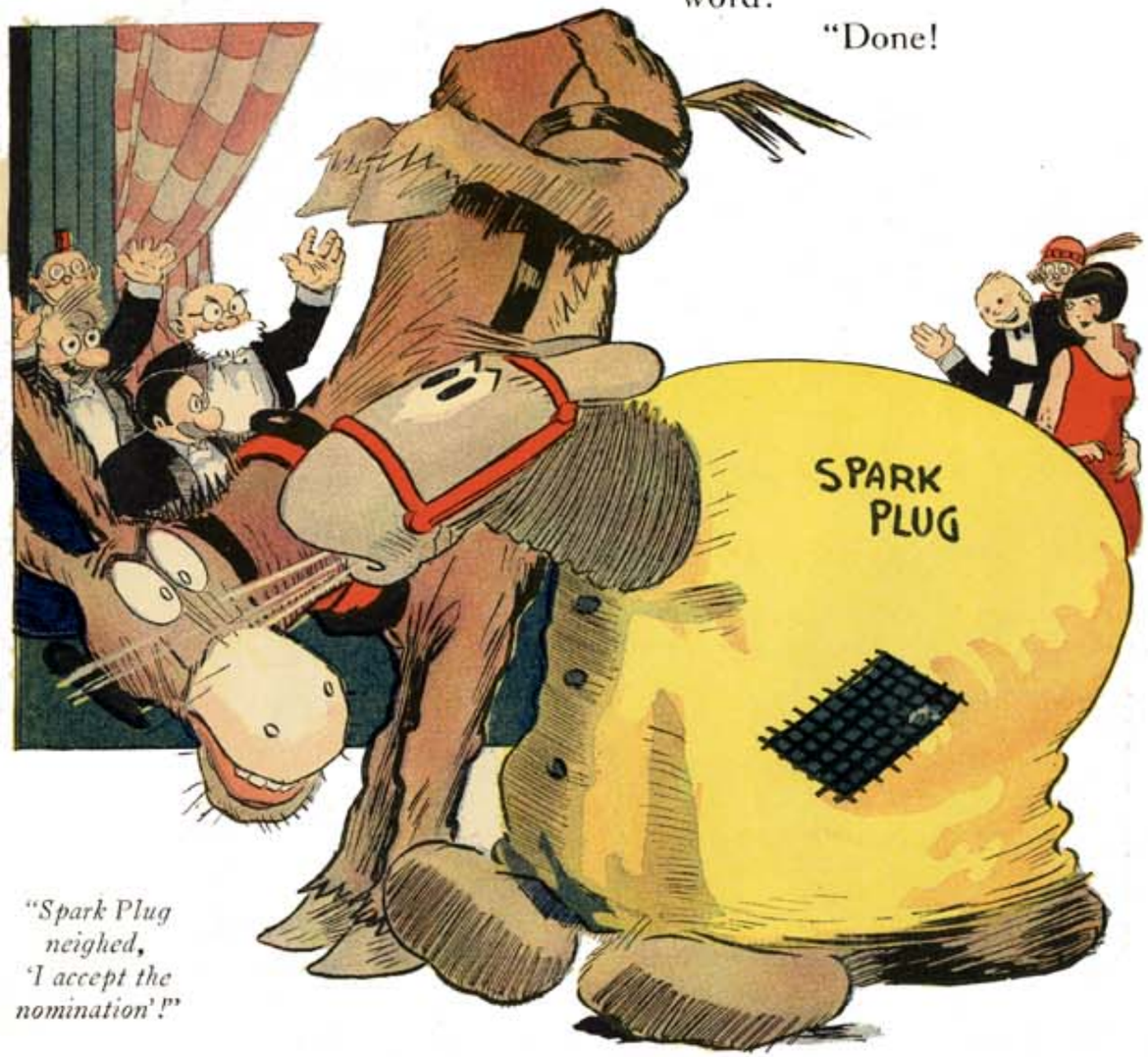
While Maud brayed deep below her breath

And turned her heels, that living death,

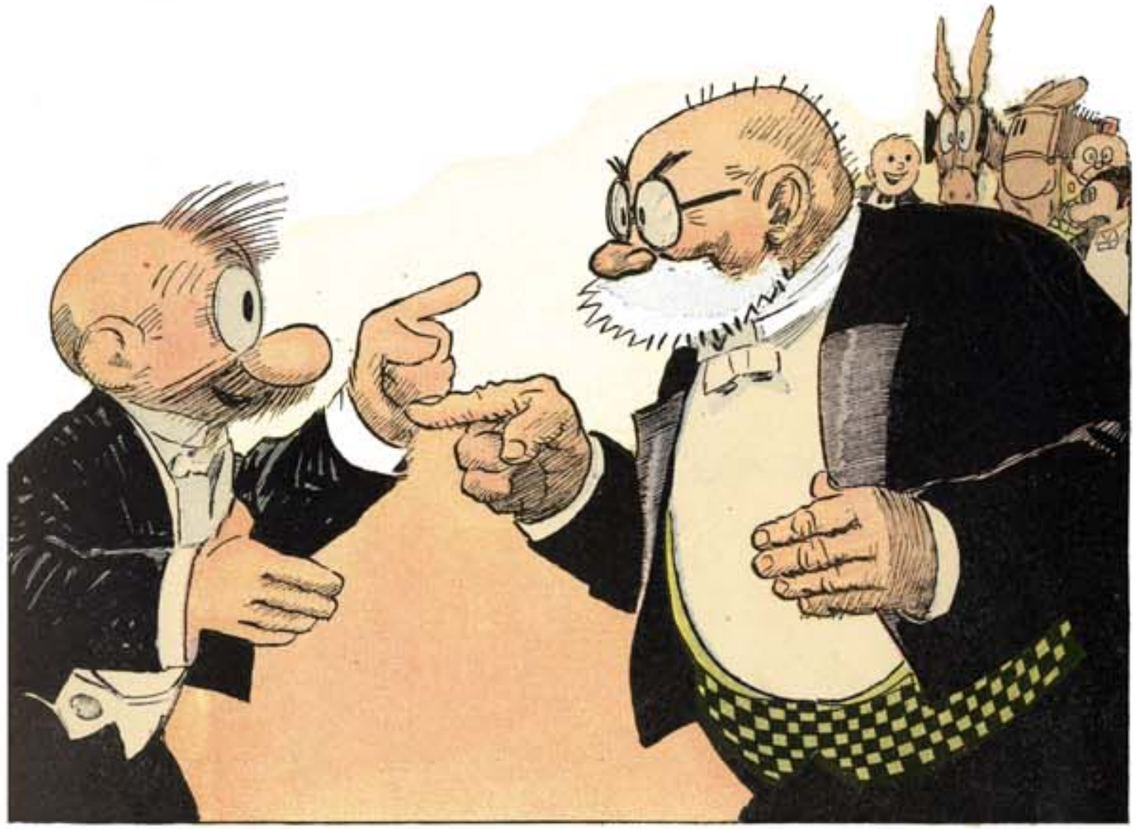
But cries of "Shush—Absurd!"

And Si jumped up with a single word:

"Done!



"Spark Plug neighed, 'I accept the nomination'!"



"Si jumped up. 'Done! Google, you're on! By heck'!"

"Google, you're on! By heck!

"Spark Plug, Sunshine or anything else drawn by De Beck!

"And you, Kabibble, when we clean up that Google stable

"I'll race Maud against you and your Complex. That fable

"Of the tortoise and hare won't begin to compare

"With this derby affair.

"We'll eat'em up raw. Come, Maud, tell your paw

"What we'll hand 'em"—and Maud laughed a wicked "Hee-haw!"

* * *

The next to arise was an Irishman. Maggie reached for him with her lorgnette; daughter whispered "Father—this isn't St. Patrick's day—you're out of order." But Dinty Moore hoarsely yipped, "Up an'

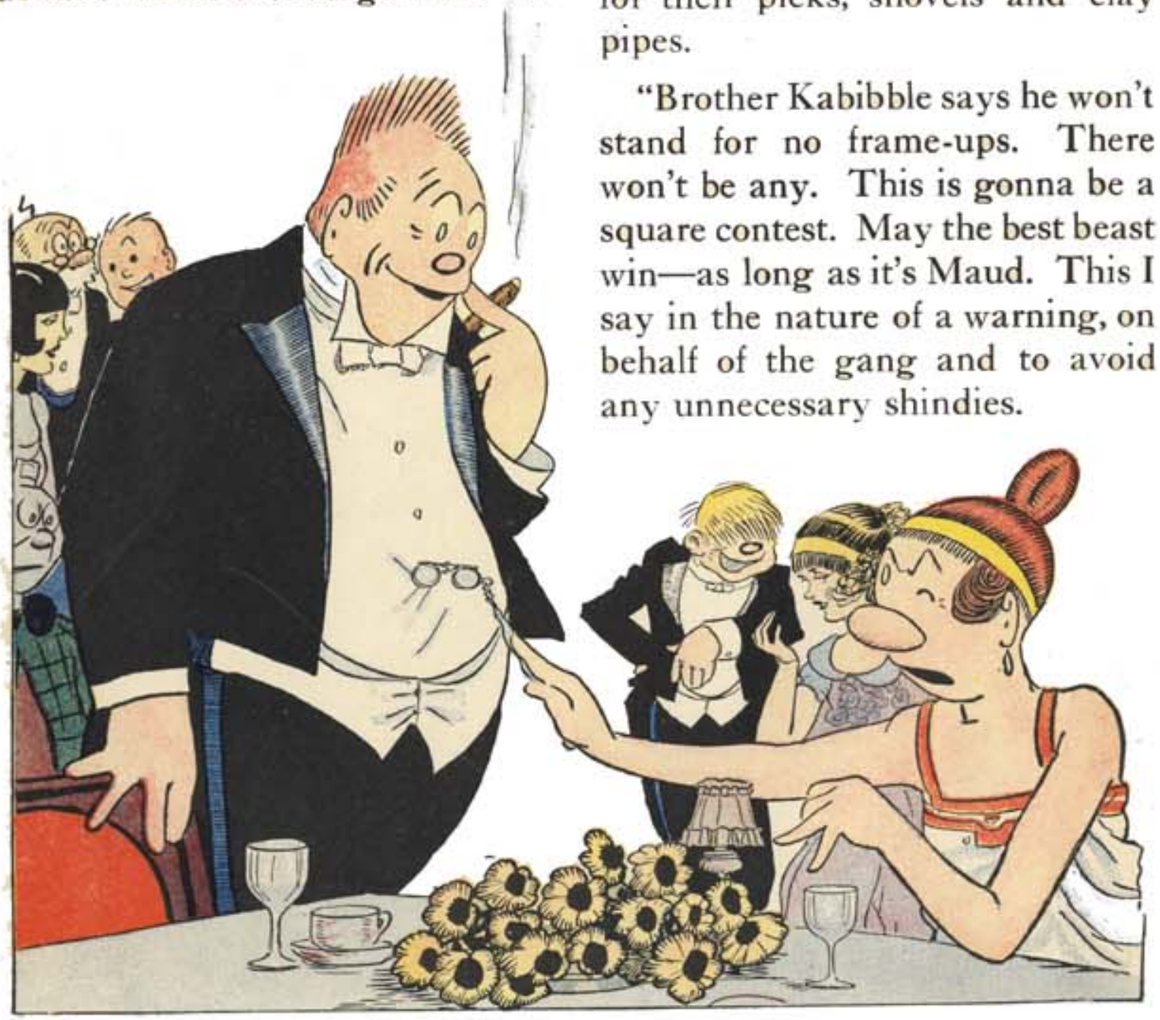
at 'em, Jiggsie," and Mr. Jiggs said:

"Friends—and Maggie: I'm a man of few words. But when I talk, I says something. And I says this—I'm on Maud for the works.

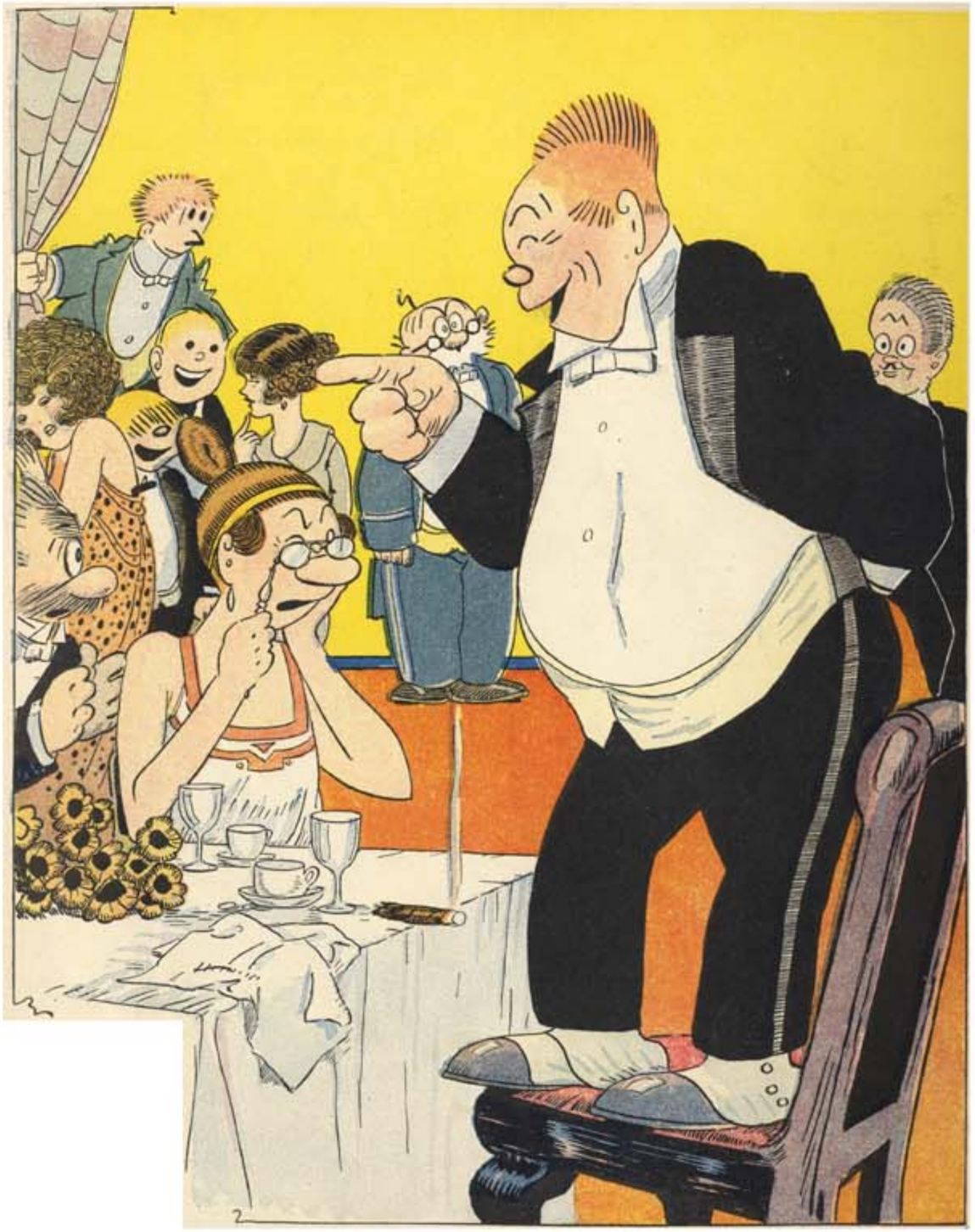
"If that cross between a horse and a tent, Sparky, who's been cheating the undertaker out of a dollar's worth o' sausage-meat too long can beat Maud, Maggie Jiggs is a widow.

"I'm here to back my judgment and my sentiments with everything down to the white spats, and Maggie'll pledge the family jools like Queen Isabella, even down to the lorgnette. My pal, Dinty Moore, will mortgage his place, and the boys in the back-room will go for their picks, shovels and clay pipes.

"Brother Kabibble says he won't stand for no frame-ups. There won't be any. This is gonna be a square contest. May the best beast win—as long as it's Maud. This I say in the nature of a warning, on behalf of the gang and to avoid any unnecessary shindies.



Mr. Jiggs said: "Friends—and Maggie"



"I'm here to back my judgment and my sentiments"

"With my right hand on my heart"

'As I stand here, with my right hand on my heart and the left hand holding a bottle, do I hear any back talk? No? Fine!

That's that."

* * *

As Jiggs sat down, the noisy chatter,

The arguments and cheers and clatter

Proclaimed the state of high excitement

Which the events of this big night meant.

The bets flew thick, the threats flew thicker,

And Maud, the famous hind-leg kicker,

Appeared to have the more supporters.

The dimes and nickels, bills and quarters

Were wagered, while with quarrel and quibble,

Jiggs, Google, Si and Abe Kabibble

Midst all the fussing and confusion

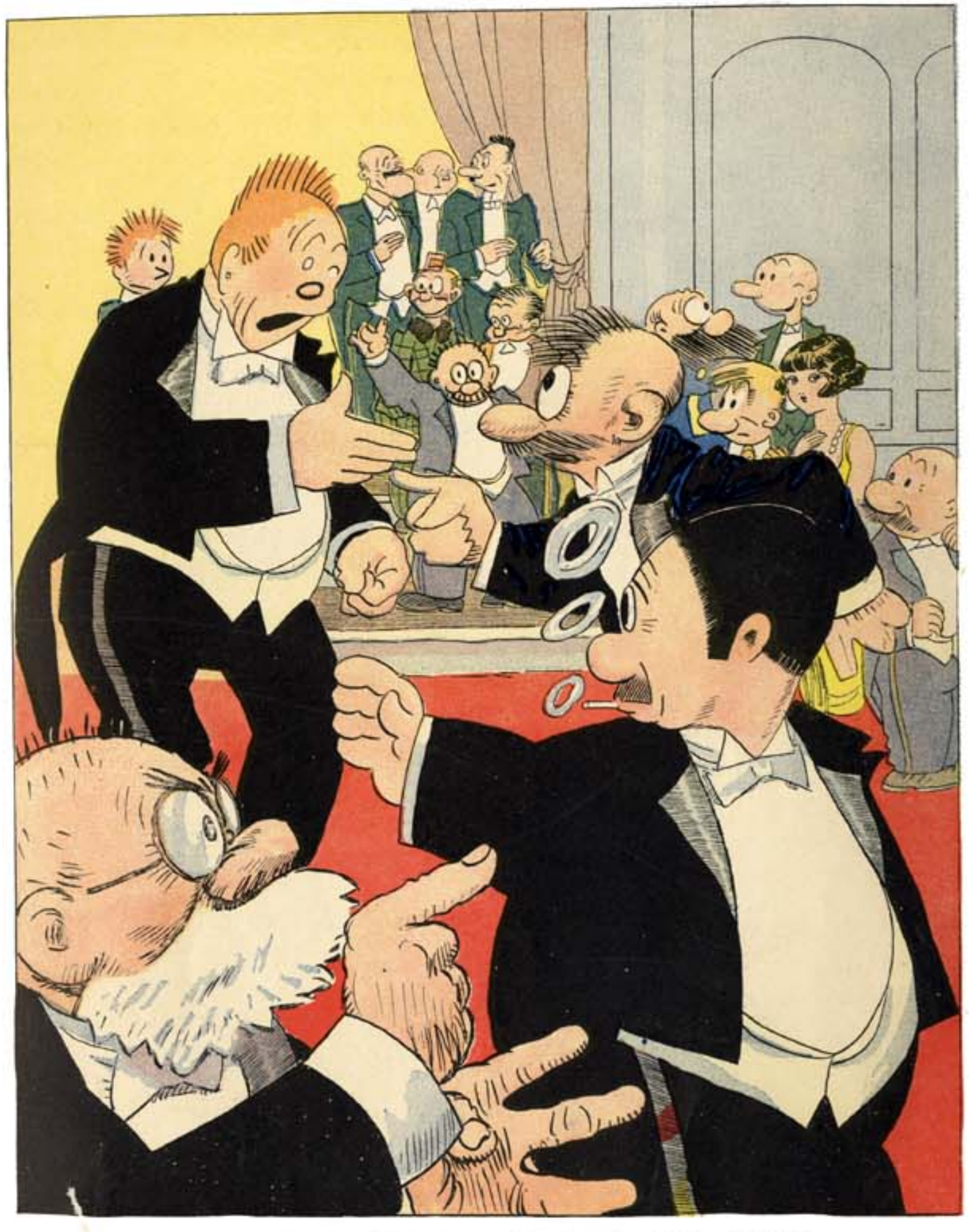
Were wrangling over the conclusion

Of plans and terms. At last a banging

Brought order; they had ceased haranguing

And Si announced the famous gallop

"Arguments and cheers and clatter"

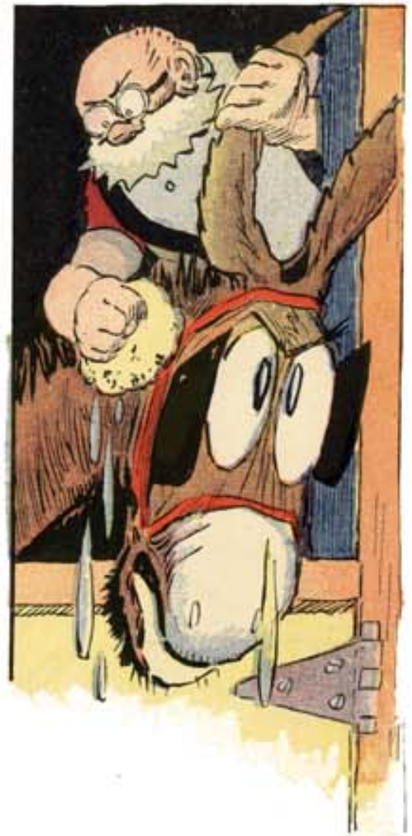


"With quarrel and quibble, Jiggs, Google, Si and Abe Kabibble

"Si announced the famous gallop"

Would have old Jiggs, his famous pal up
On Maud himself, while Sparky's jockey
Would be that rider, black but cocky,
The well known Sunshine; the committee
Would get the best track in the city,
And just a mile had been selected
For distance; he had been directed
To state the time they thought most fitting
Was Saturday, weather permitting,
At half past one. After much barter
The four had named official starter
Paw Perkins; and there sure would be some
Great experts in the judges threesome,
For Boob McNutt, Detective Owl-eye,
And Der Captain—not one with a foul eye—
Had been the choice. And since the eating
Was over, they'd adjourn the meeting.

CHAPTER TWO



CHAPTER TWO

The Great Day

The breeze is balm, a friendly sun
Beams down upon the Land of Fun,
'Tis noon, and soon—at half past one
The thrilling race will have begun.
At last the outer portals slide,
The gates are opened, high and wide,
And in they swarm, a mighty tide,
Weary and bleary and awry-eyed.

For many of them have not slept,
All night their watchful waiting kept,
And while the hours crawled and crept,
They wrangled, wagered, worried, wept.
For never since the ink was dry
On the first comic strip, have I
Beheld excitement run as high;
You should have seen them crowding by!

"The gates are opened high and wide, and in they swarm, a mighty tide"

With her faithful Fido, good old Mac,

Toots and Casper, Mrs. Kwakk Wakk,

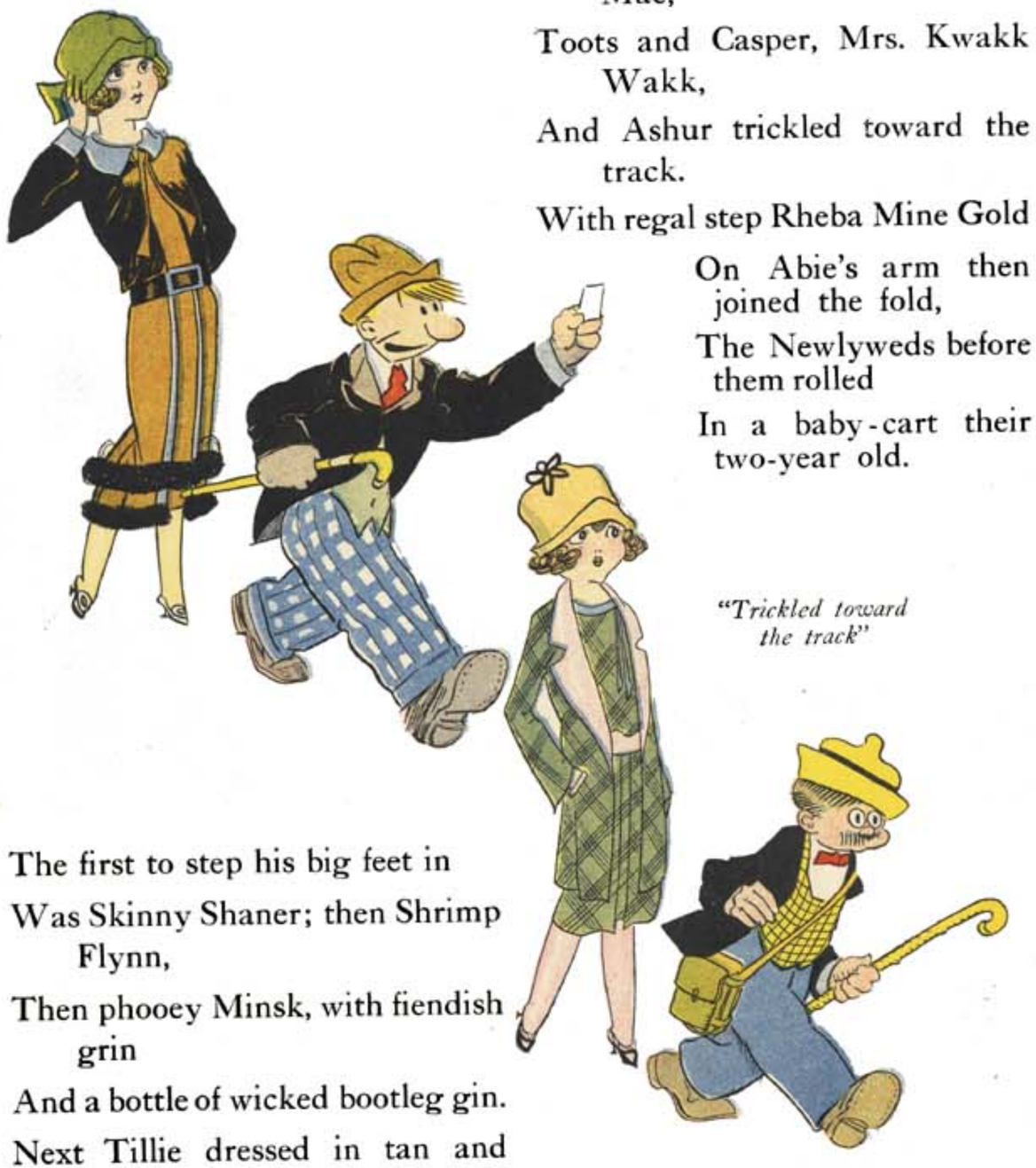
And Ashur trickled toward the track.

With regal step Rheba Mine Gold

On Abie's arm then joined the fold,

The Newlyweds before them rolled

In a baby-cart their two-year old.



"Trickled toward the track"

The first to step his big feet in

Was Skinny Shaner; then Shrimp Flynn,

Then phooey Minsk, with fiendish grin

And a bottle of wicked bootleg gin.

Next Tillie dressed in tan and black,

Der Captain, muttering in his beard

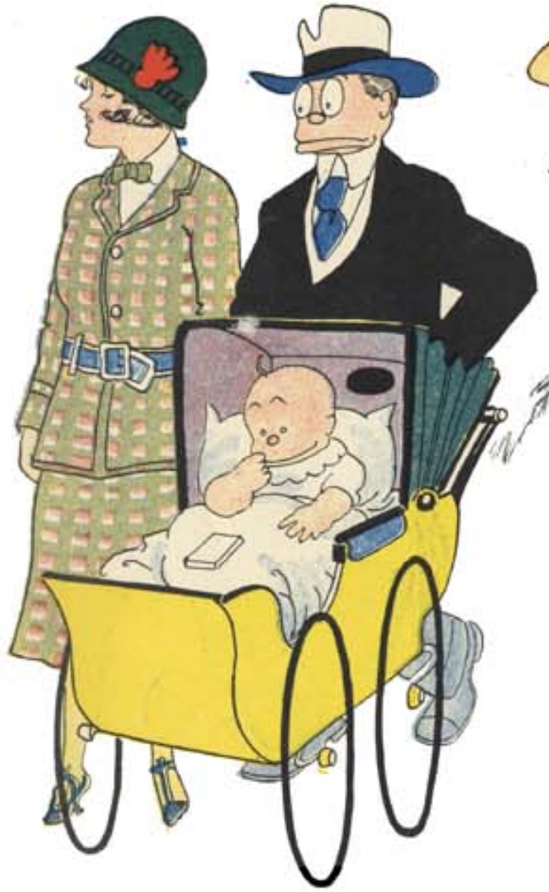
As Hans and Fritz he sternly steered,

While Ma the Gateway barely cleared

With waddling gait as she appeared.

Now little Jimmie, in brand new jeans,

Escorted by his doggie, Beans,



"The Newlyweds and their two-year-old"

"Mrs. Kwack Wakk and Neewah"

Slim Pickens, leanest of the leans—

They came afoot and in machines.

Dumb Dora, wiser than she seems,

Our Nemo, walking in his dreams,

All strip society, in streams,

Single, in groups, quartettes and teams.

"Maggie Jiggs with her Daughter"

Maggie Jiggs, lofty and superior, wafted in with her daughter, the Jiggs heiress. Dinty Moore and his cohorts, appeared at about the same time. Mrs. Jiggs cut them dead, turned a cold shoulder and passed on.

"But, mother, dear," protested Daughter, "why do you pick them out for a snub? They are father's supporters to the last ditch."

"Daughter," reproved Maggie, icily, "such words as 'pick' and 'ditch' are most appropriate for your father's gang, but they are not used in the best circles. Never mention such things. You know how sensitive I am about some things . . . Come now, that shockingly vulgar Google is approaching, and if he addresses me I'll crown him with half a brick."

"Dinty Moore and his cohorts"

At this Krazy Kat pricked up his ears and Ignatz Mouse ducked.

Google was, indeed, coming up. Swaggering on his short legs, which looked the more pudgy because beside him strode the long-limbed Rudy. Barney's two-gallon hat was set well back on his perspiring forehead and it was easy to see that he was ill at ease. And well he might be, for he had not seen Sparky since the night before, when he left his Arabian steed in custody of his Senegambian valet, Sunshine.

And there, trying to look chipper but woefully worried, came

"Krazy Kat and Ignatz"

Happy himself, with his three little nephews, the quaint children of his queer brother, Gloomy Gus. The

"Beside Barney strode the long-legged Rudy"

"Happy Hooligan and the Three Children of Gloomy Gus"

little ones looked up at him fondly and piped:

"We hope"
"You win"
"Uncle Happy."

The stands were filling up rapidly. On the veranda of the clubhouse the more prosperous were being served with refreshments and collations by Gus, fumbling and stumbling between the kitchen and the tables, stopping en route now and then to toss off a naive observation to Gussie, the checkroom cutie.

The bets were flying thick and fast. Jiggs, who had just come up from a visit to the paddock, where Si reported Maud he-hawing to go and fit to run the race of her life, brandished handfuls of greenbacks and dared the Google-eyed Sparkpluggers to cover his money.

"Rheba Mine Gold ventured a frightened dollar"

Mr. Applesauce solemnly bet two dollars against the mule, but Jiggs' confidence made the others timid.

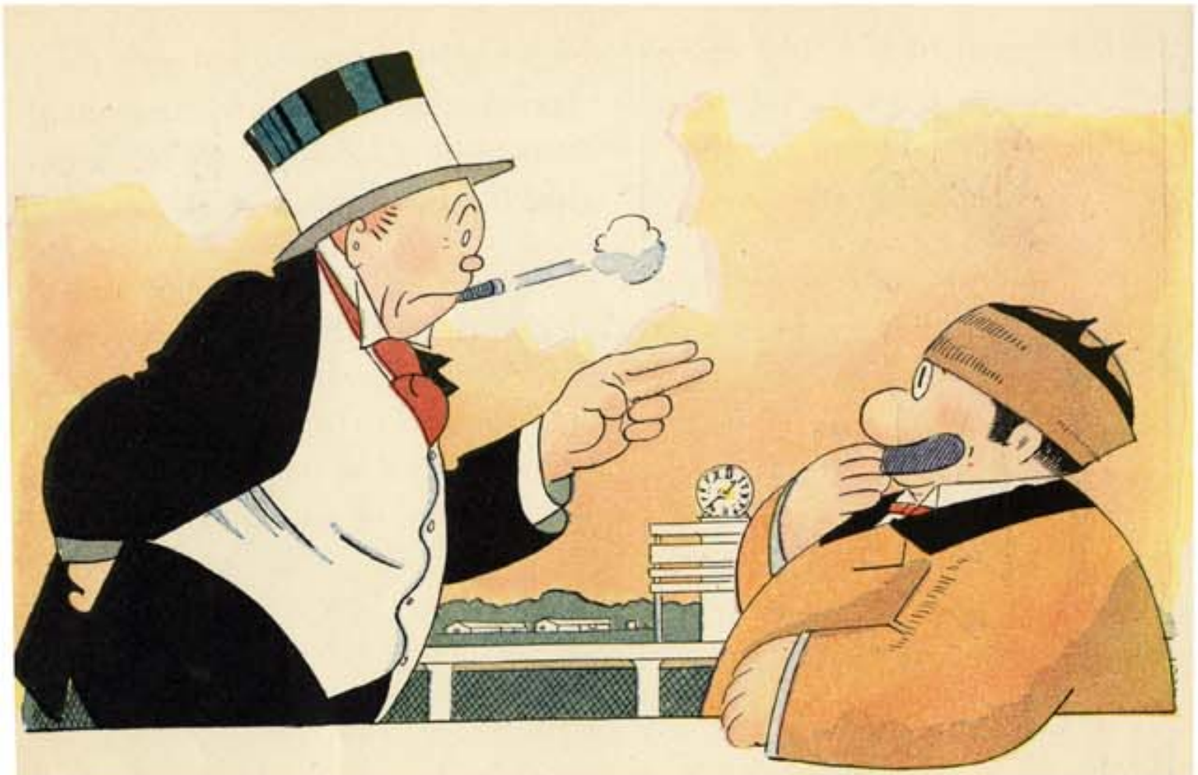
Maud was easily ruling as the favorite now, though her record was more distinguished for kicking than sprinting.

Rheba Mine Gold ventured a frightened dollar on Sparky, but everyone knew it was a wager more of hope than of faith, for when Jiggs offered odds of five to four, she insisted on seven to five.

Her Abie beamed on her for her business instinct, and several times took out a banknote as though tempted, but put it back into the pocket of his striped trousers.

Abie was all-the-way for Sparkplug, but he was awaiting developments.

"Abie was all the way for Spark Plug"



"'Twenty to one is the time, not the odds!' yelled Jiggs"

The only time he almost did something rash was when he heard Jiggs shout:

"Twenty to one!"

Kabibble roared back, "I'll bet eight dollars at that price."

"Twenty to one is the time, not the odds," yelled Jiggs. And Abie subsided.

The flappers and younger women were gossiping and sizing up each other's clothes; the men were hotly discussing the relative points of the contestants; those directly interested in the outcome were surrounded by encourging friends, each cluster giving reasons why its champion must win easily.

When—

Suddenly the report struck the assemblage and flew like wildfire.

Sunshine was unconscious!

Yes, that arch conspirator, Minsk, always ready to outwit and defeat

Abie the Agent, had craftily smuggled a wicked bottle into the grounds. And, as everyone well knew, Sunshine had his weaknesses.

Poor Sunshine, all on edge, had yielded to temptation—only one little sip; but, his appetite aroused by the demon drink, he had taken another—and another—and—

They had found him, huddled all in a heap, in a far corner of the paddock, totally unfit to ride a race upon which depended not only the happiness of Happy and Suzanne, the prosperity of all the Sparkplug supporters, but comic strip history!

A great buzz ensued. And then a great hush.

The Maud partisans, though the race now seemed won for them, did not approve of the snake-in-the-grass trickery, even though it loomed up as to their great advantage.

"A great buzz ensued"

The populace of the Land of Fun consists of well-meaning, decent, honest folk in the main.

They shook their heads and declared it most unfortunate, most regrettable.

"Sunshine was unconscious!"

"A race upon which depended the happiness of Happy and Suzanne"

Hurrying across the field and to the edge of the stands they saw a familiar figure—Barney Google.

Everyone hushed. Barney took off his illustrious hat and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, gentlemen and ladies,

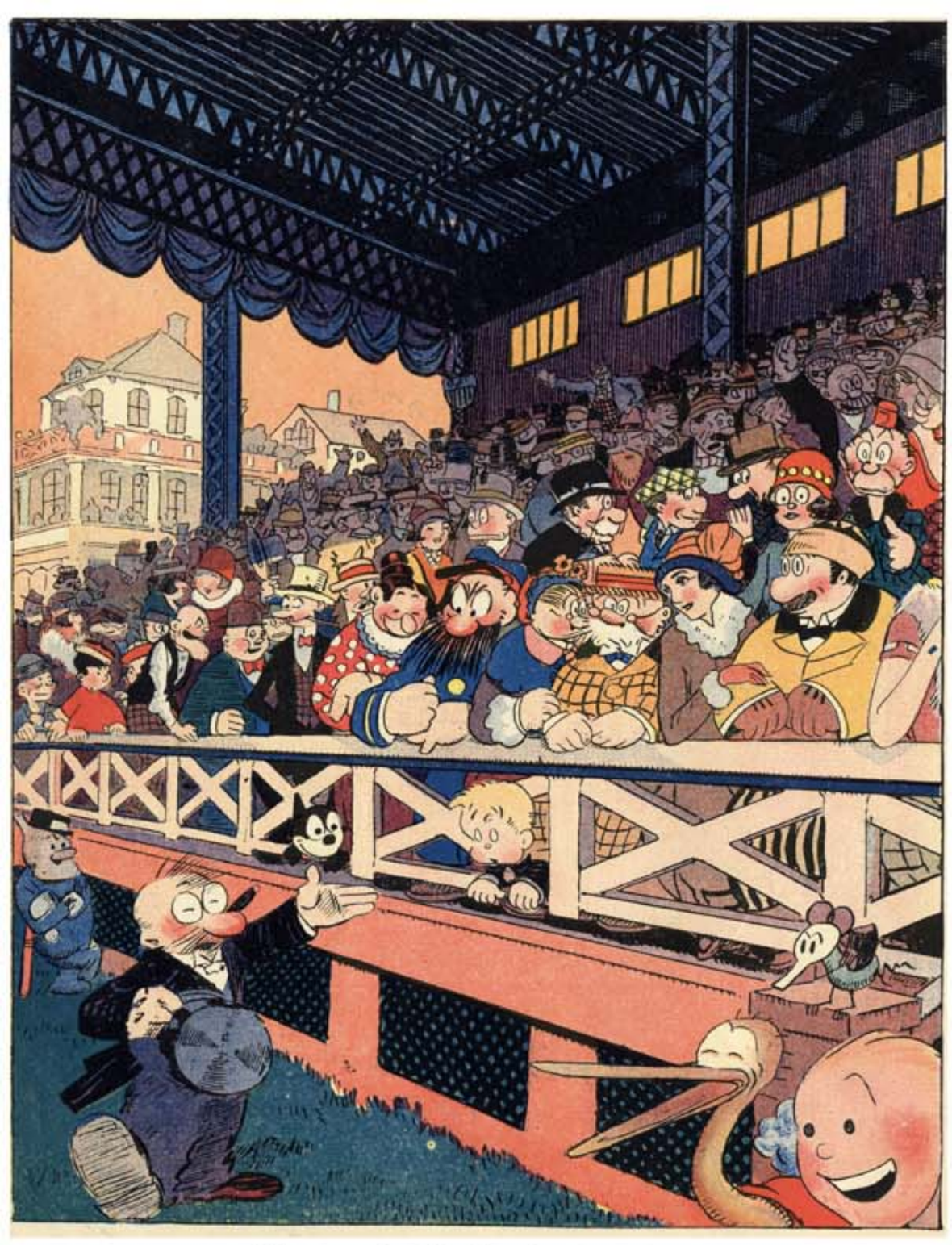
That double-crossing tip and tossing Minsk, a fiend from Hades,

Has went and gone and done a deed so foul, and black and villainous

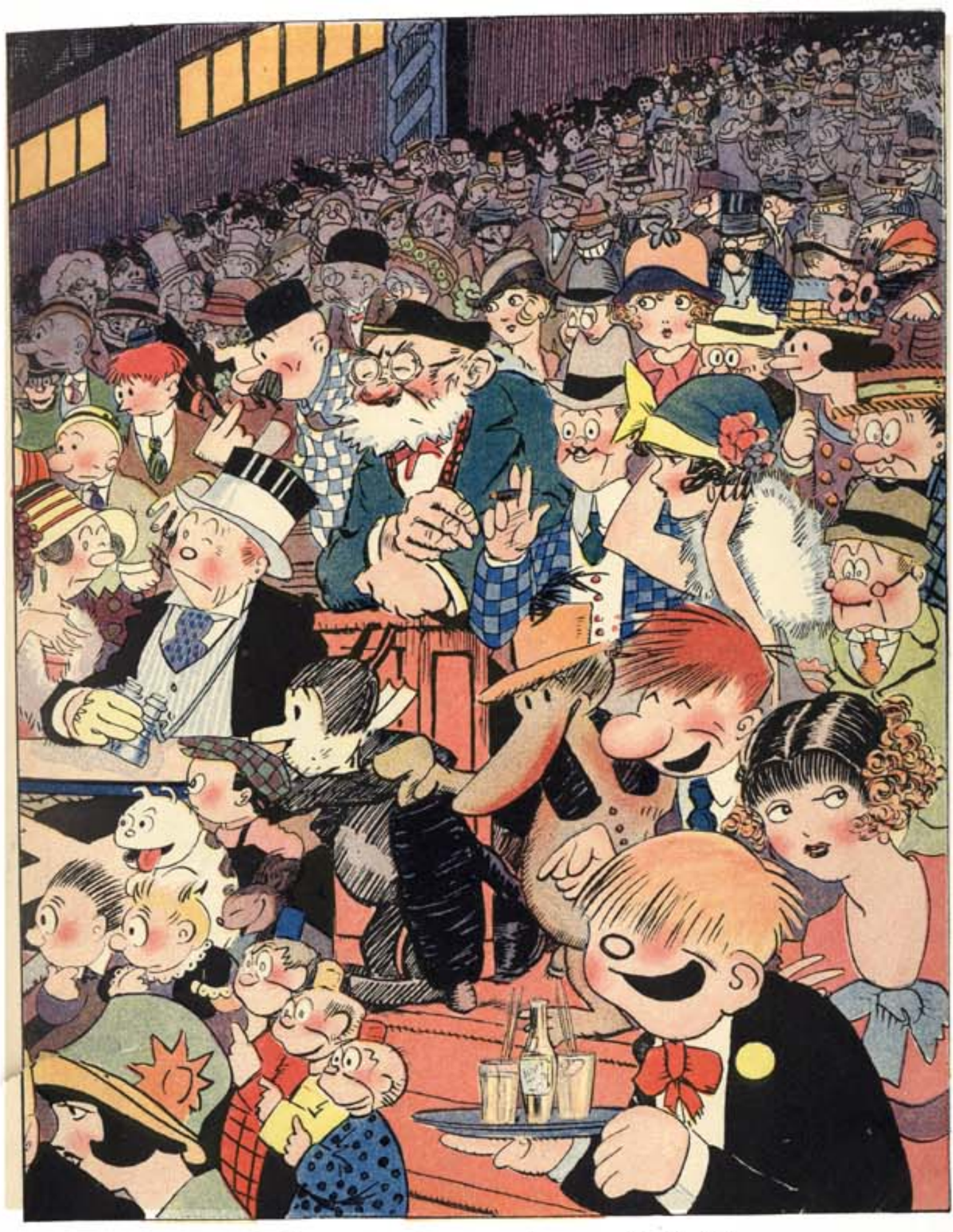
And thinks that in the race he's found a certain way of killin' us,

You all have heard the trick he pulled back yonder in the paddock

As a result of which poor Sunshine's senseless as a haddock.



"Barney took off his illustrious hat and said—



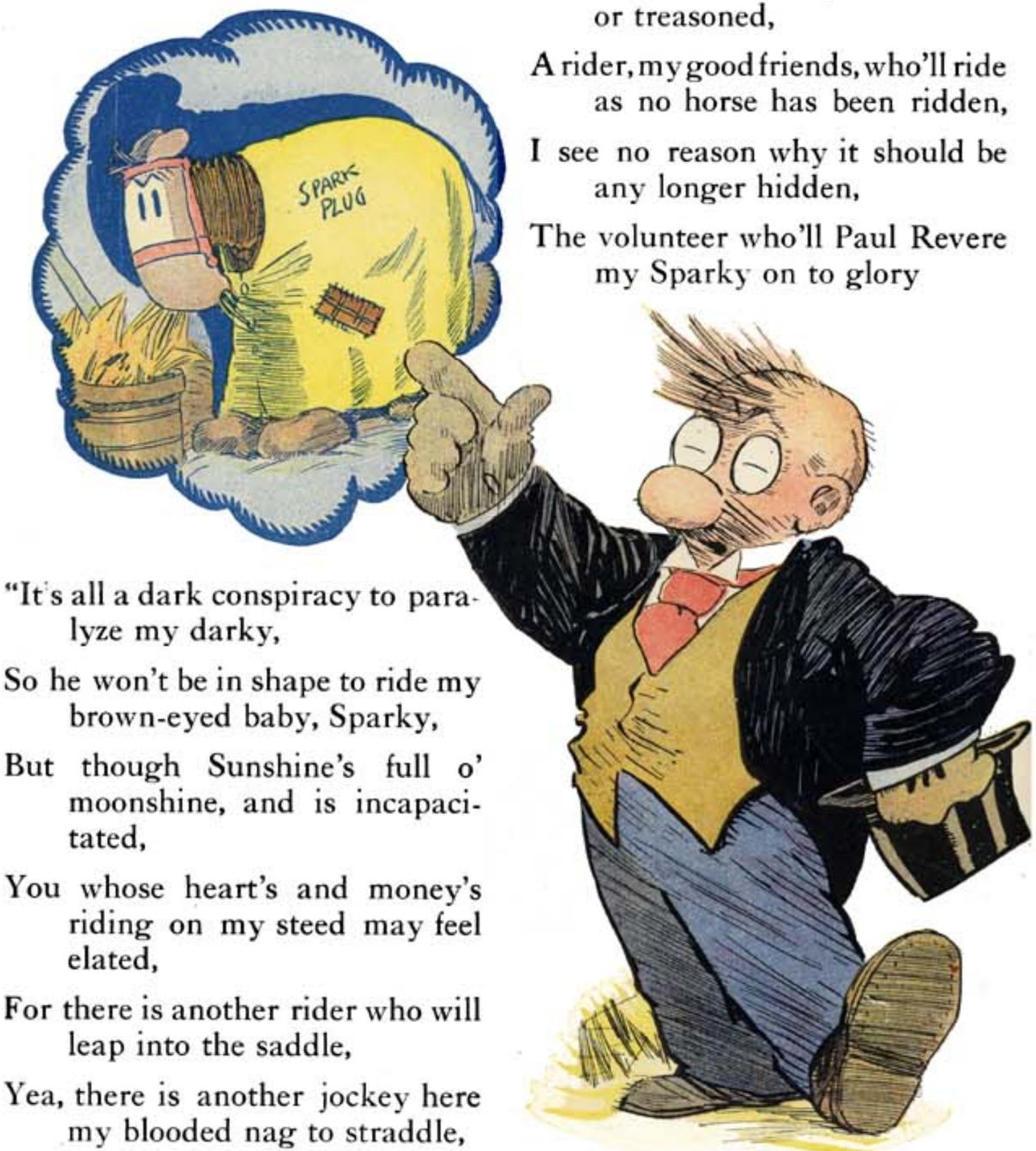
—'Ladies and gentlemen, gentlemen and ladies!' "

Who can't be bought or caught
or scared, corrupted, bluffed
or treasoned,

A rider, my good friends, who'll ride
as no horse has been ridden,

I see no reason why it should be
any longer hidden,

The volunteer who'll Paul Revere
my Sparky on to glory



"It's all a dark conspiracy to paralyze my darky,

So he won't be in shape to ride my
brown-eyed baby, Sparky,

But though Sunshine's full o'
moonshine, and is incapacitated,

You whose heart's and money's
riding on my steed may feel
elated,

For there is another rider who will
leap into the saddle,

Yea, there is another jockey here
my blooded nag to straddle,

And to ride him in to vict'ry; an
expert tried and seasoned,

"'There is another to ride him!' said Google"

Is one who needs no introduction, famed in song and
strip and story,

A horseman, sportsman; modesty forbids I boost unduly,

The rider, friends, is no one
but myself—B. G. Yours
truly!"

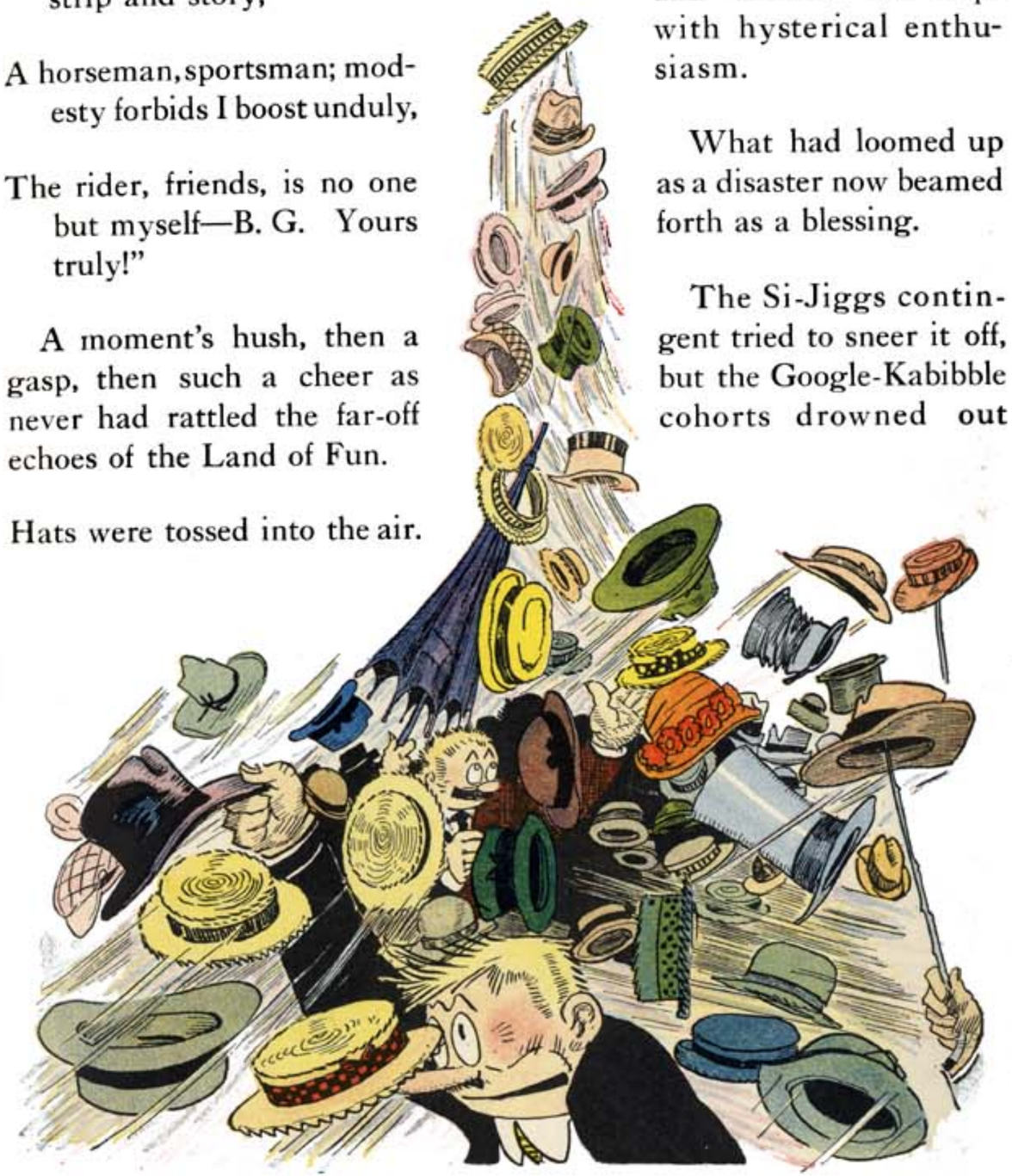
A moment's hush, then a
gasp, then such a cheer as
never had rattled the far-off
echoes of the Land of Fun.

Hats were tossed into the air.

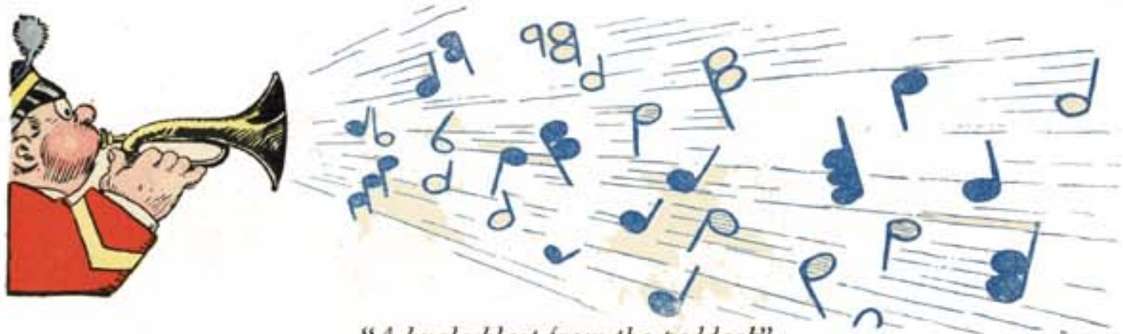
Men and women hugged each other and danced
and cackled and wept
with hysterical enthusiasm.

What had loomed up
as a disaster now beamed
forth as a blessing.

The Si-Jiggs contingent tried to sneer it off,
but the Google-Kabibble
cohorts drowned out



"Hats were tossed into the air"



"A bugle blast from the paddock"

their sarcastic comments on Barney's unblushing opinion of himself as a jockey.

* * *

A bugle blast from the paddock announced that visitors would now be admitted, and there was a scramble from the stands and the veranda to go forth and view the saddling of the nags.

Jiggs waived the privilege of strapping the gear on Maud to her trainer and owner, Old Si. Barney said no hands but his own would perform the ceremony on Sparky.

The Google entry looked sad and wan, which, however, deceived no one, as that was well known to be Spark Plug's way just before a

"A scramble from the stands and the veranda"

"Jiggs waived the privilege of strapping the gear on Maud"

"Spark Plug, the Google Entry, looked sad and wan"

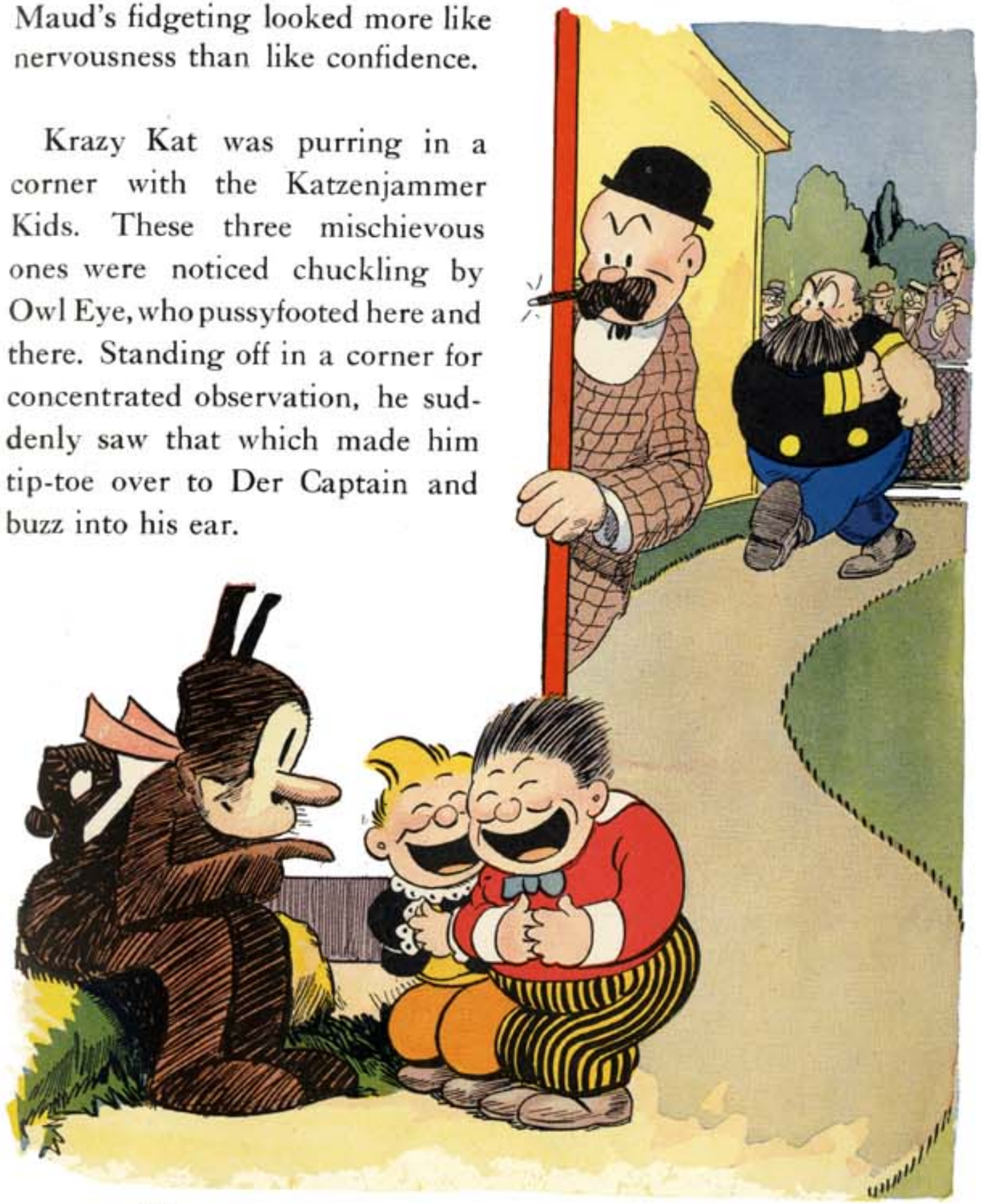
vital contest. Maud, on the contrary, was frisking her fiery energy, bristling with pep.

The spectators were boiling inwardly with intense interest, as they viewed their favorites, remarking on each trifling point and gesture. One thought Sparky's eyes looked unusually dull; another whispered that Maud's left hind foot seemed more nervous than her right front one; yet a third solemnly pointed out that Sparky's breathing was uneasy, and from a fourth came the criticism that

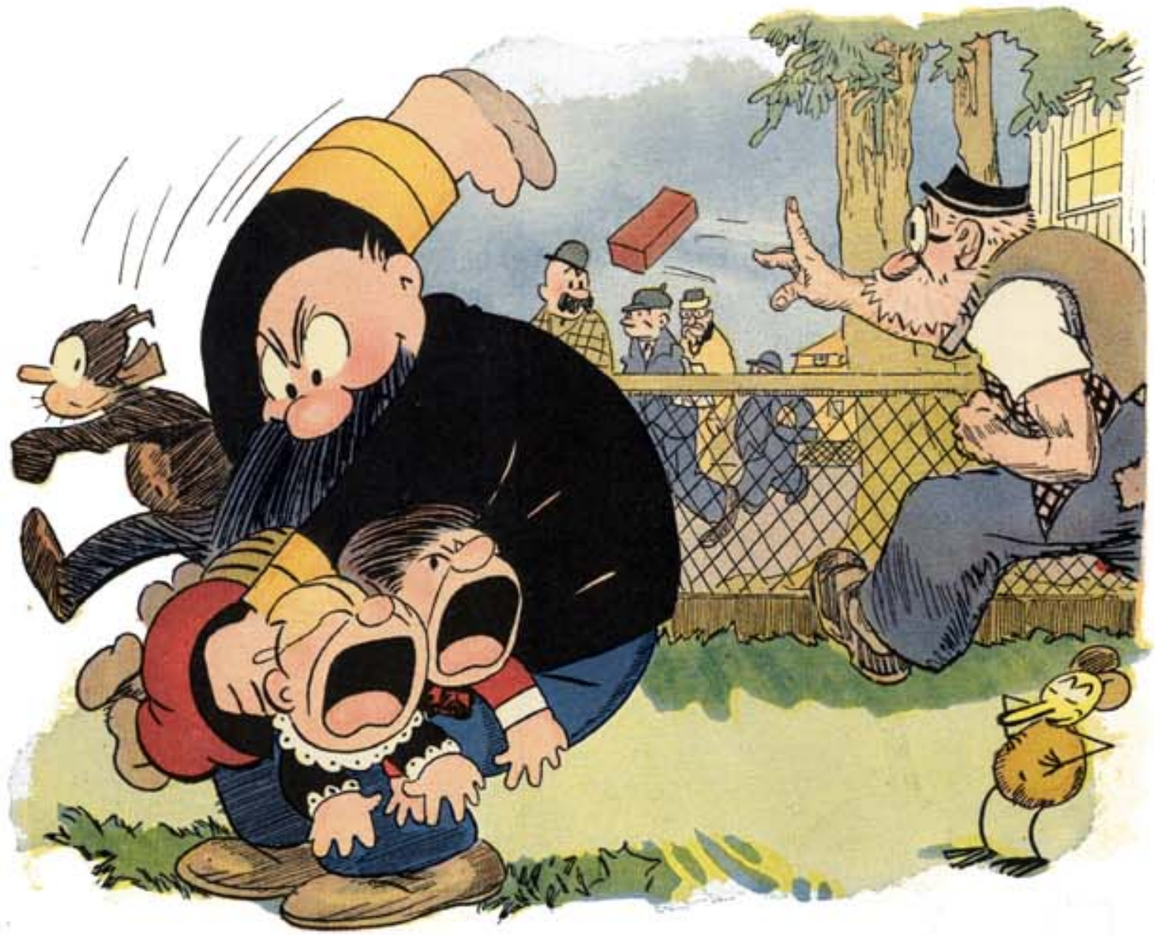
"Maud's T. N. T. heels"

Maud's fidgeting looked more like nervousness than like confidence.

Krazy Kat was purring in a corner with the Katzenjammer Kids. These three mischievous ones were noticed chuckling by Owl Eye, who pussyfooted here and there. Standing off in a corner for concentrated observation, he suddenly saw that which made him tip-toe over to Der Captain and buzz into his ear.



"Krazy Kat was purring in a corner with the Katzenjammer Kids"



" 'So!' said the Captain as his big hand came down"

Like the Bearded Avenger, Der Captain stole up on the Kids, and with a sudden swoop he encircled their waists with one arm and spread them side by side across his generous knee, and with the other hand he beat a rat-a-tat upon the upturned area. Krazy Kat scooted off and Old Si, who had heard what Der Captain was saying to the Kids, shouted, as he ran furiously, "I'll give Krazy Kat a Krazy Walloping!" which made that mischievous little imp Ignatz Mouse laugh an utterly unmouse-like guffaw.

"So," said Der Captain, as his big hand came down, and with each syllable as he spoke, he spanked, "So you put a burr under the saddle by Maud, huh? Squizzle

my dodgasted timbers, you leetle ship-scuttling pirates, I should make you valk the plank. You want to make a bum out of this race, is it? You and that lowlife Krazy Kat, you shmoke up this scheme, huh?"

Whack! Slap!

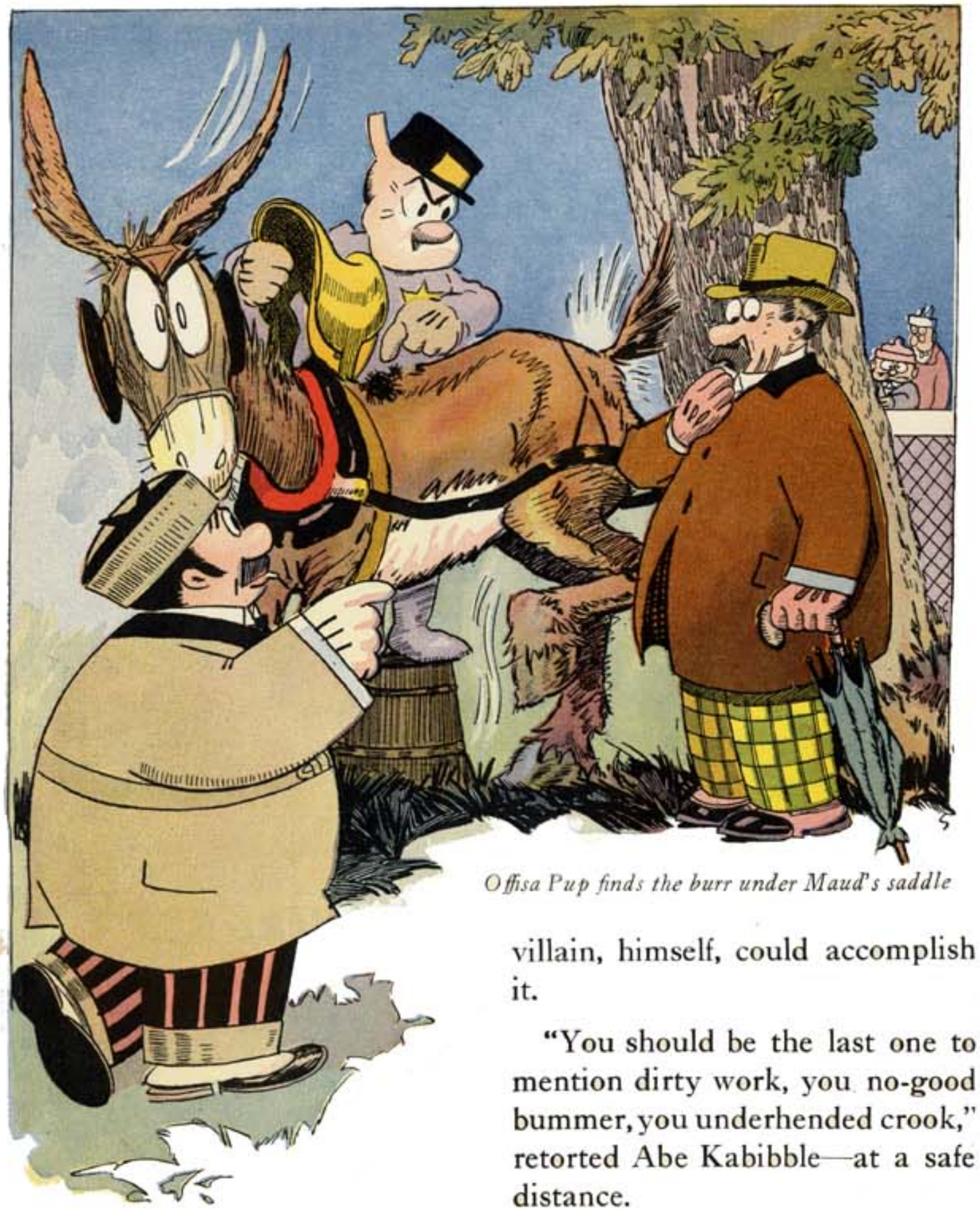
Ma Katzenjammer squirmed her corpulent way through the crowd and rescued her darlings.

"Dey dit not!" she insisted.

But Offisa Pup had already jumped on Maud's back and extracted from under her saddle a cockle-burr—and now the cause of Maud's twitching and rearing came to light.

"Oy—dirty work," hissed Minsk, and those words are so hard to hiss that no one but one who is a

"Ma Katzenjammer rescued her darlings"



Offisa Pup finds the burr under Maud's saddle

villain, himself, could accomplish it.

"You should be the last one to mention dirty work, you no-good bummer, you underhended crook," retorted Abe Kabibble—at a safe distance.

The time was now growing short. It was ten minutes before the start.

A bugle rang and echoed: time for the parade.

The good funny folks scampered back to their seats and waited.

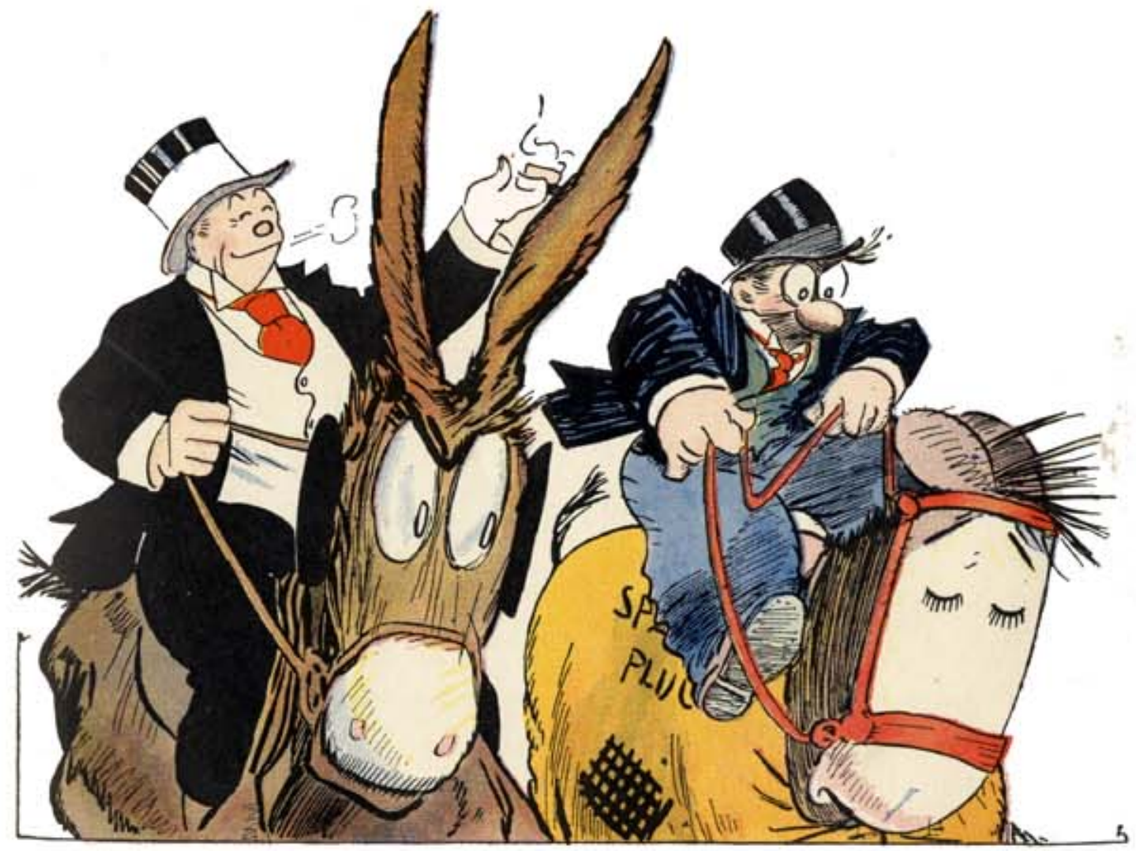
Ah!—the cheers tore the balmy air, as, coming around a bend, side by side, at a walk, came—

Maud, with Jiggs up.

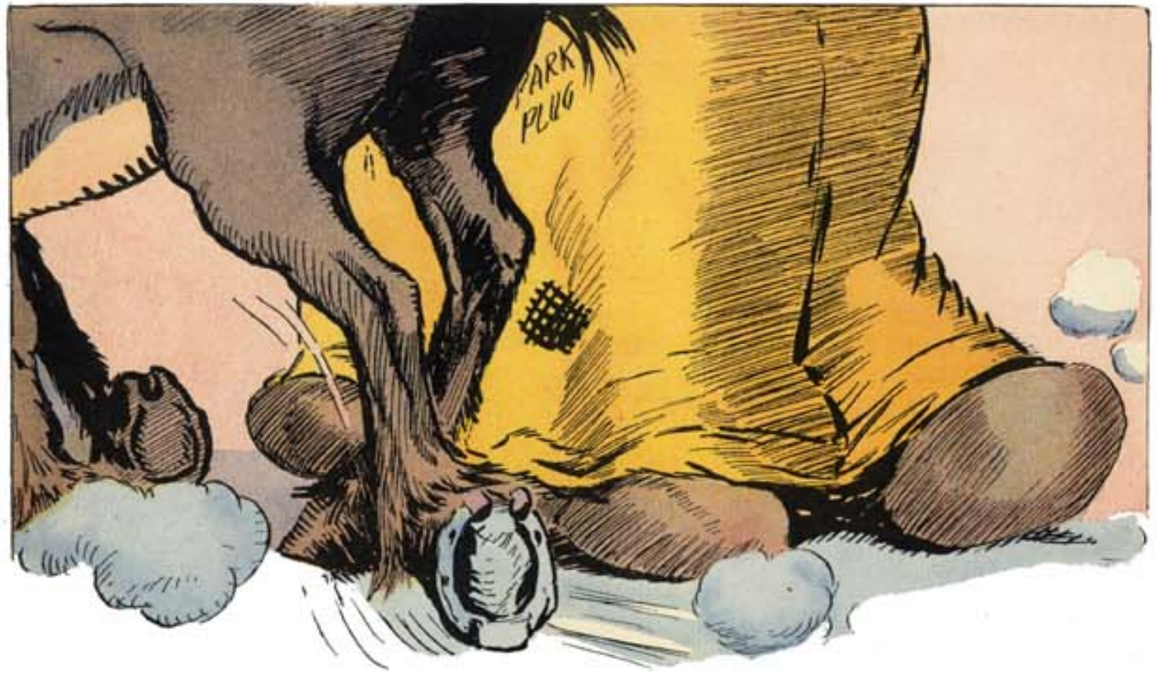
Spark Plug, with Google up.

Past the grand-stand they proceeded, Maud capering, Sparky mooching along in his hang-dog way.

The riders were not dressed jockey-fashion.



"Maud, with Jiggs up. Spark Plug, with Google up"



"Maud capering, Sparky mooching along"

In the Land of Fun, the characters must stand by their personal eccentricities.

Never before or since, in all the world of real or fanciful life, had there been a race between a mule and a horse, each ridden by a plug-hatted little man. We, of this earthly sphere, might think such a thing quite weird. But in the Land of Fun they were used to Jiggs and Barney and had seen them wear their famed tiles on many occasions when no one but a comic artist would regard such apparel as fitting. So no one stopped to remark on the incongruity of it. Everyone was too intensely wrapped up in the race, which was on the very verge of starting.

Paw Perkins, official starter, was already standing at the side of the rope which would let down the barrier, pistol in hand.

Up the ladder behind the lofty coop on a level with the finishing mark, the three judges,—Owleye, Der Captain and Boob McNutt were climbing. Ah — they are there, field-glasses in hand.

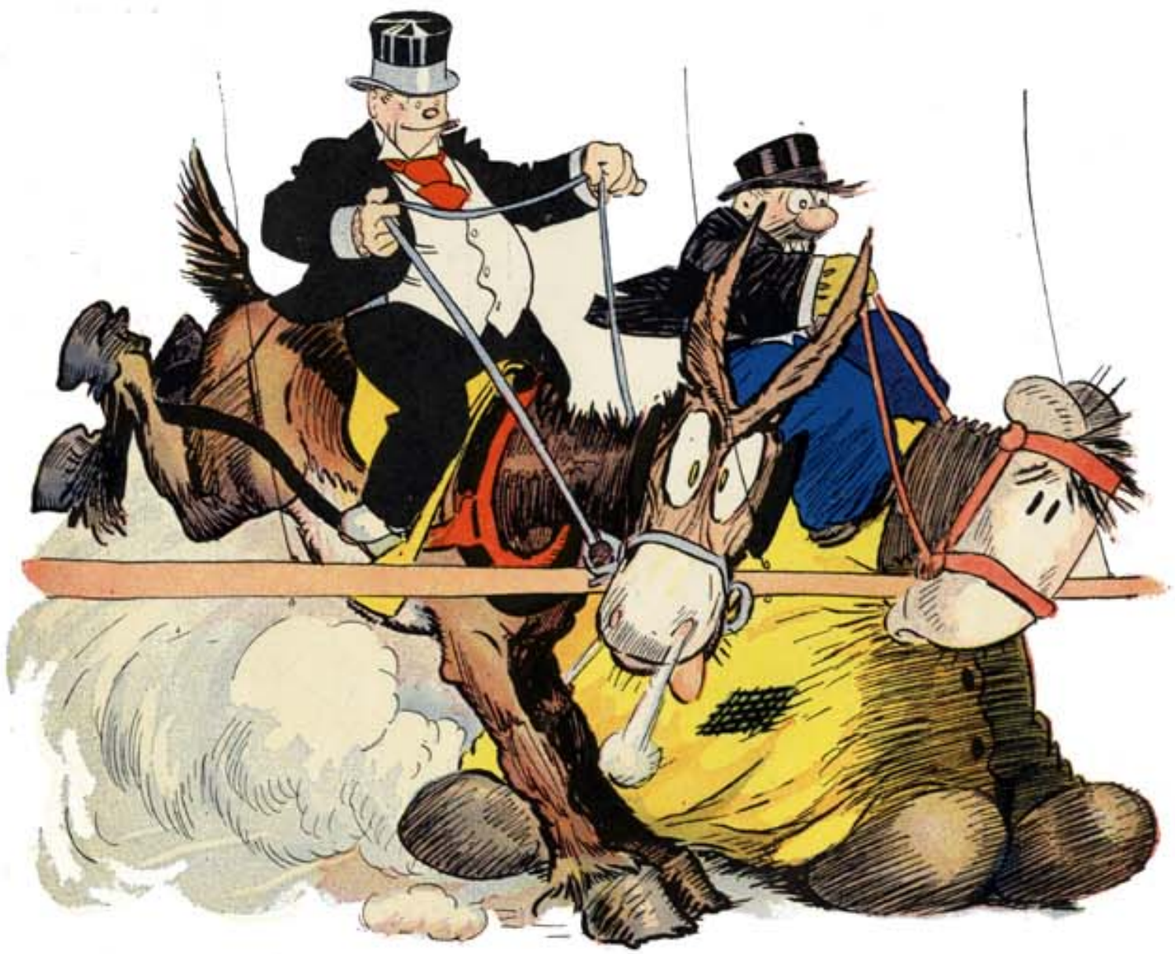
Maud and Sparky pass the last of the stands, turn, retrace their steps. Maud is now cavorting, and steps away from Sparky. Is

"Paw Perkins, pistol in hand"

it prophetic? Barney's horse still plods on. Maud passes the starting line and Jiggs turns her and brings her back with her chest against the light scantling, suspended by slender wires from a swinging overhead arm, which is a guide to the starting mark, and is known as the barrier. Sparky leisurely crawls up to it, also. The steeds stand side by side.

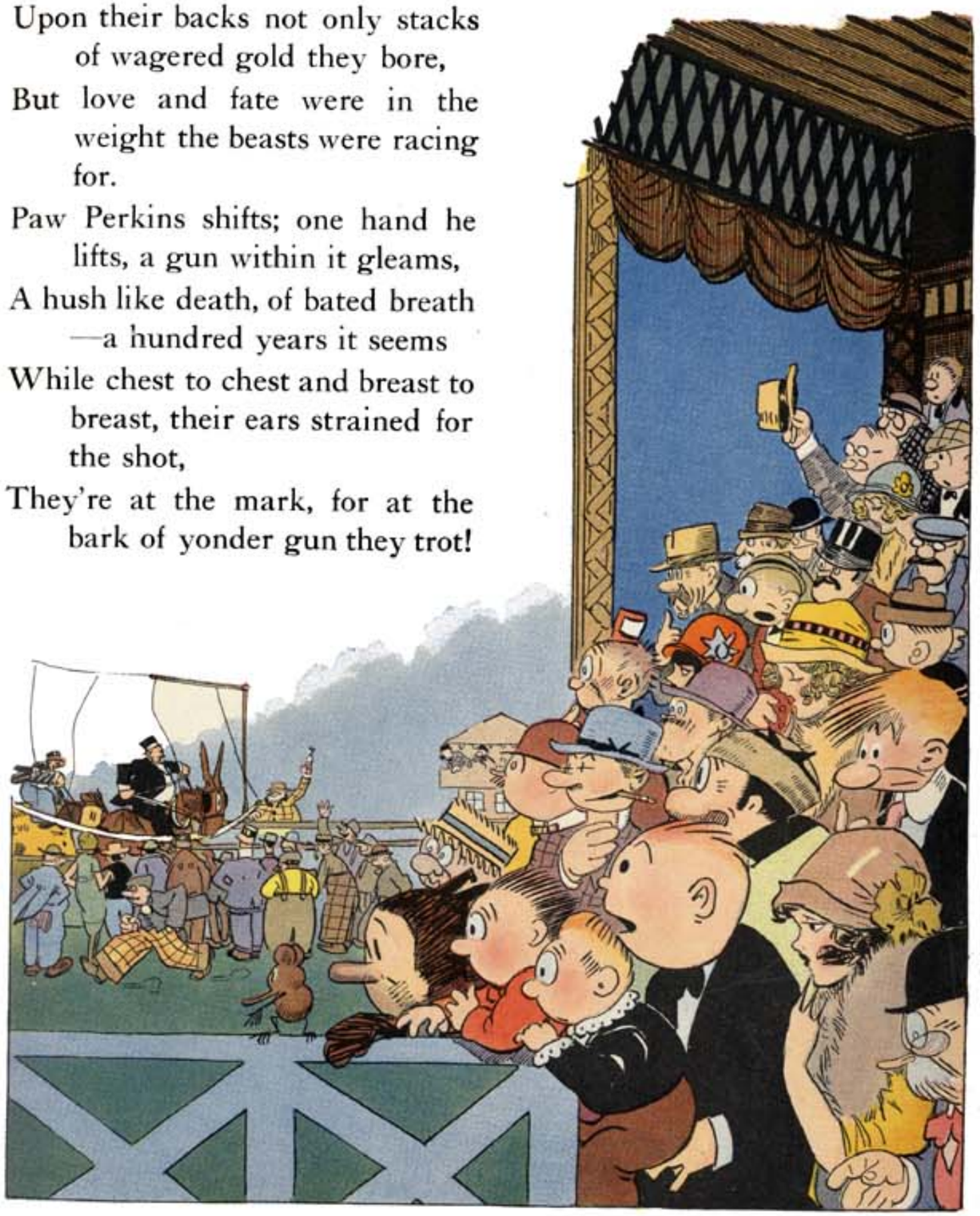
* * *

Each heart ran fast, for now at last, while only one could win,
Each heart ran high, for, do or die, the race would soon begin.



"The steeds stand side by side"

Upon their backs not only stacks of wagered gold they bore,
But love and fate were in the weight the beasts were racing for.
Paw Perkins shifts; one hand he lifts, a gun within it gleams,
A hush like death, of bated breath —a hundred years it seems
While chest to chest and breast to breast, their ears strained for the shot,
They're at the mark, for at the bark of yonder gun they trot!



"A hush like death, of bated breath"

Fair cheeks grow pale and strong men quail at this terrific test.

Jiggs, though, is cool astride his mule, he waves a careless hand

And some it thrills while some it chills throughout the crowded stand;

The barrier clears, the hopes and fears are now at fever heat,

And the suspense becomes immense, a thousand pulses beat,

And hands are clenched and brows are drenched as lips are tightly pressed,

"Jiggs waves a careless hand"

And as she scorns, like Satan's horns, straight upright stand her ears.

Poor Sparky's back is limp and slack, as though about to cave,

He looks as though all set to go into his equine grave;

His thin legs sag, the poor old nag, dejected, wan and blue,

While Barney's eyes like pumpkin pies pop forward from his head

And as he sits his teeth he grits, his face is flaming red.

Maud champs her bit, her eyes are lit with snappy, scrappy fire,

Her mane awry, each hair on high as stiff as chicken wire,

Her nostrils wide, her head aside, her face with meanness leers,

"A sudden crack! Across the track it Comes with startling boom"

Seems fit to race right to the place
where horses turn to glue.

A sudden crack! Across the track
it comes with startling boom.

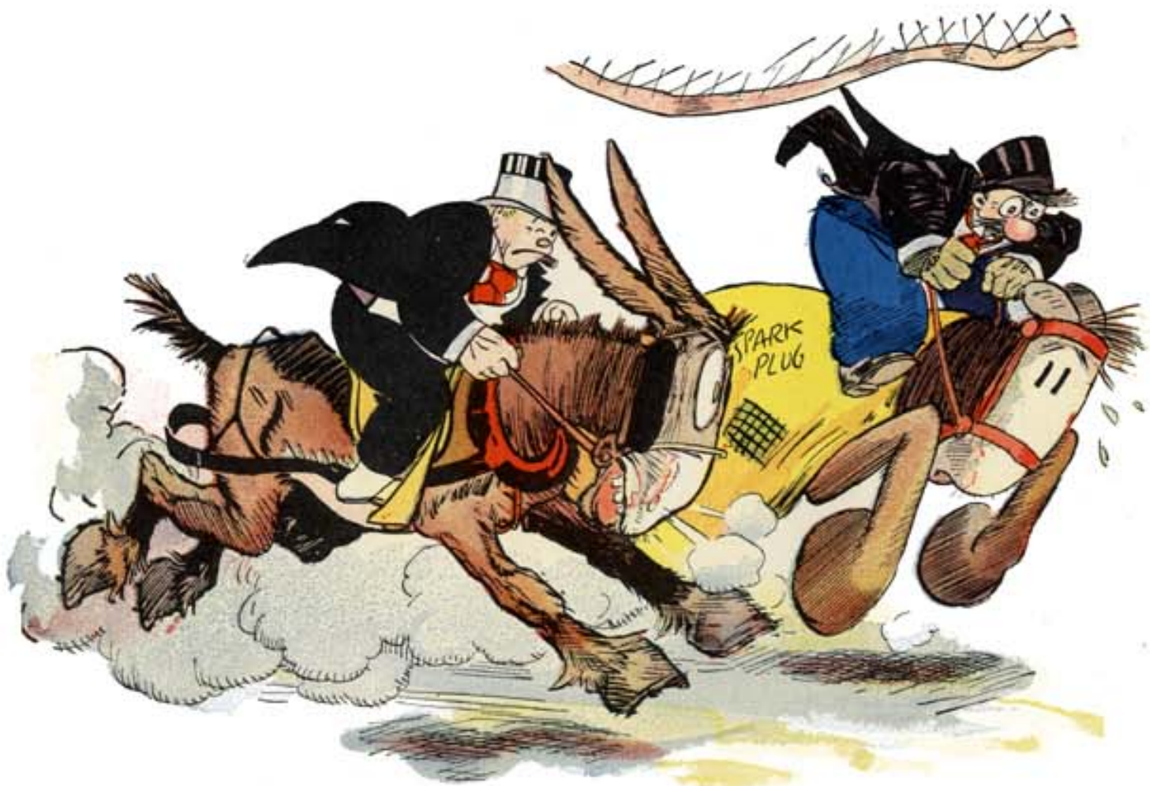
It echoes clear where all may hear,
loud as the crack of doom.

One moment's hush, then with a
rush they're off!

They go!

They're gone!

Eight hoofs as one are on the run.
The fateful race is on!

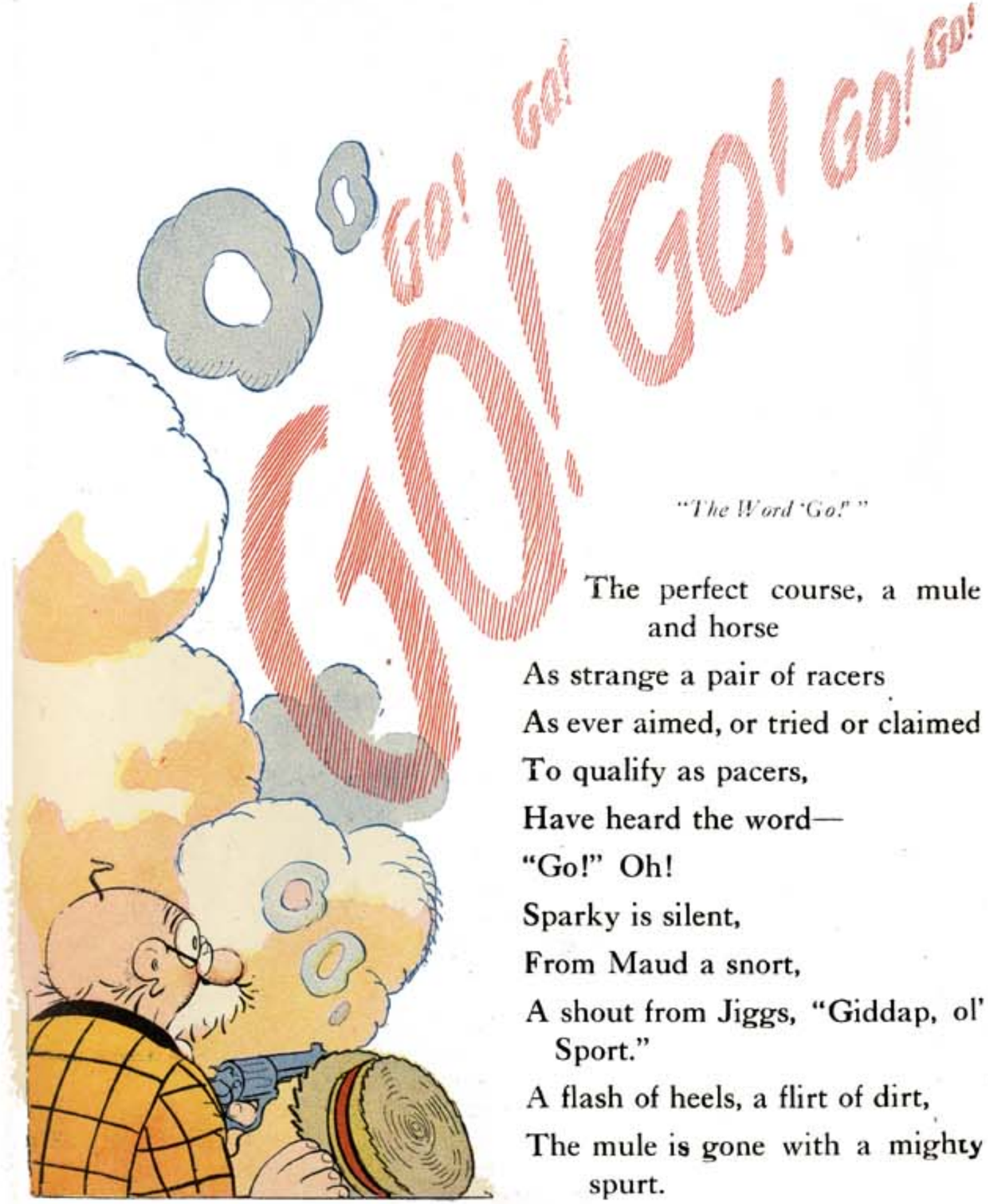


CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE

The Great Race

Fancy the scene: An oval of green
With a ribbon of brown sur rounded.
The blaring band up in the stand
Where a thousand pulses pounded,
The sleepy hills, immune to thrills,
Against the far horizon
Send echoes back across the track.
There, with a thousand eyes on



"The Word 'Go!'"

The perfect course, a mule
and horse
As strange a pair of racers
As ever aimed, or tried or claimed
To qualify as pacers,
Have heard the word—
"Go!" Oh!
Sparky is silent,
From Maud a snort,
A shout from Jiggs, "Giddap, ol' Sport."
A flash of heels, a flirt of dirt,
The mule is gone with a mighty spurt.

A hundred cries, two hundred sighs,

As there, before their very eyes

They see a limp and sorry ghost,

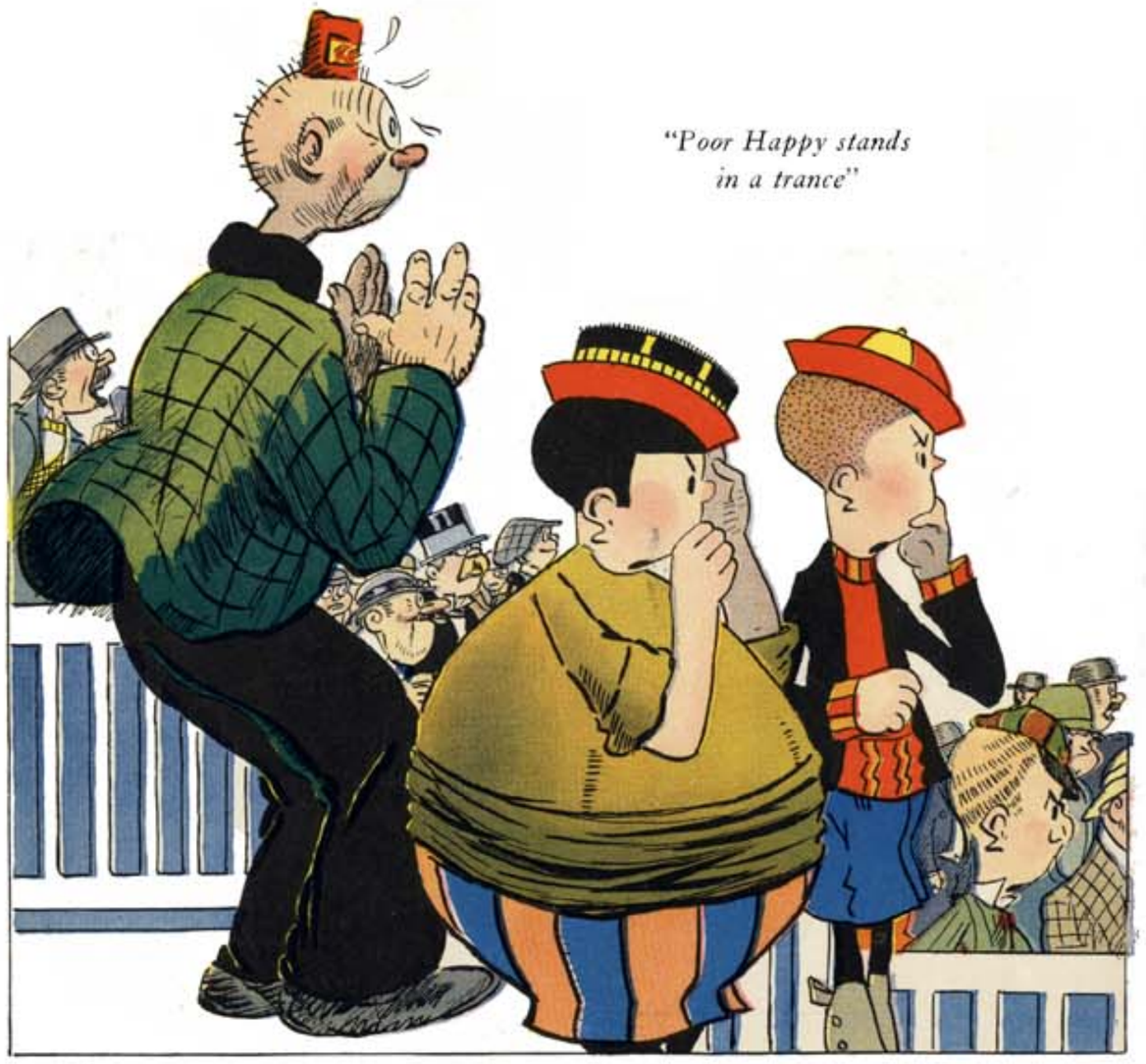
Spark Plug has halted near the post!

The Jiggs-Maud-Si fans scream and dance,

Poor Happy stands as in a trance,

Even the Katzenjammer brats

For once are still, while Krazy Kat's



"Poor Happy stands in a trance"

Queer eyes fill up with feline tears.

But still that villain, Minsk, he cheers.

Good-hearted Gus can't even speak,

Tillie stops powdering her cheek,

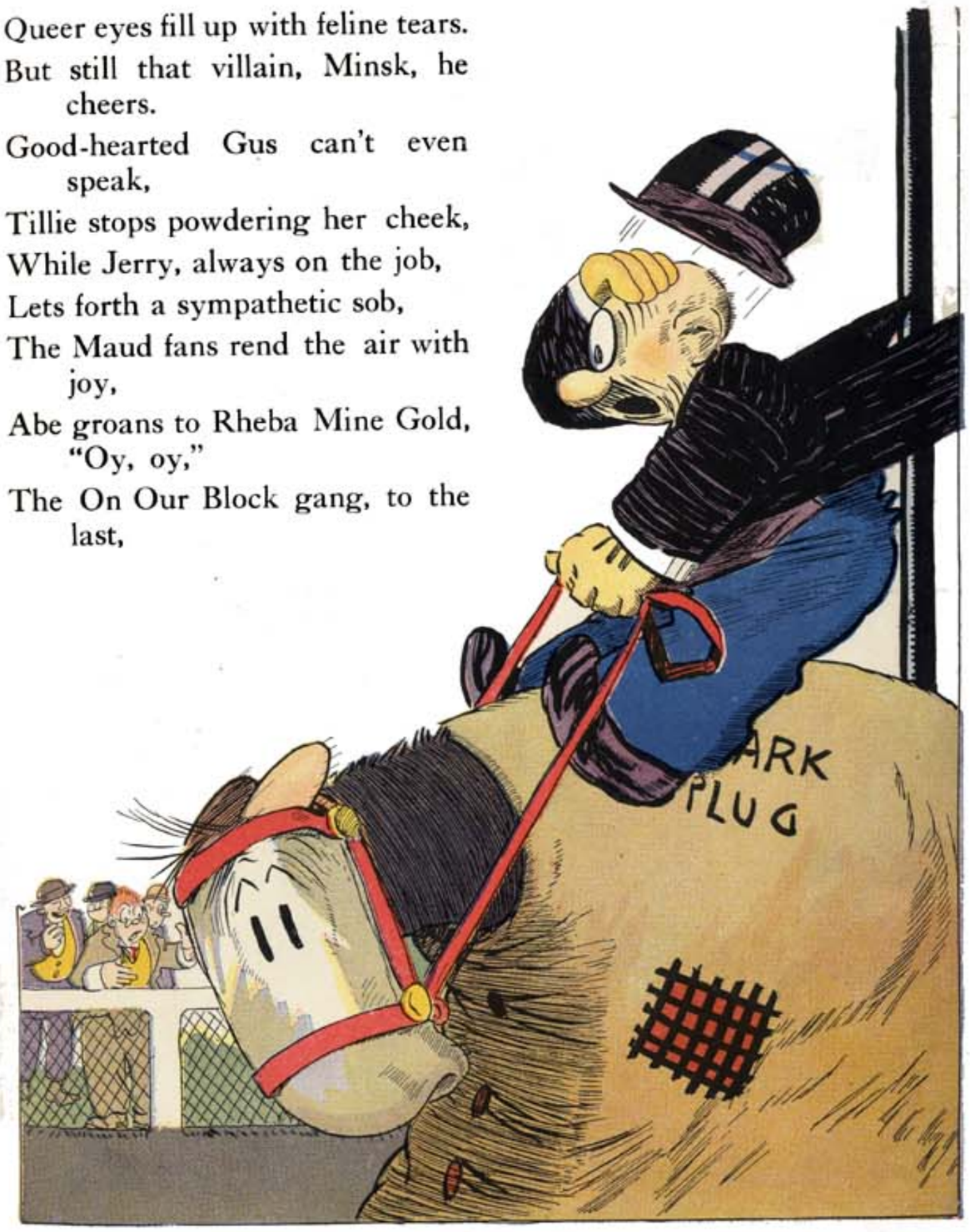
While Jerry, always on the job,

Lets forth a sympathetic sob,

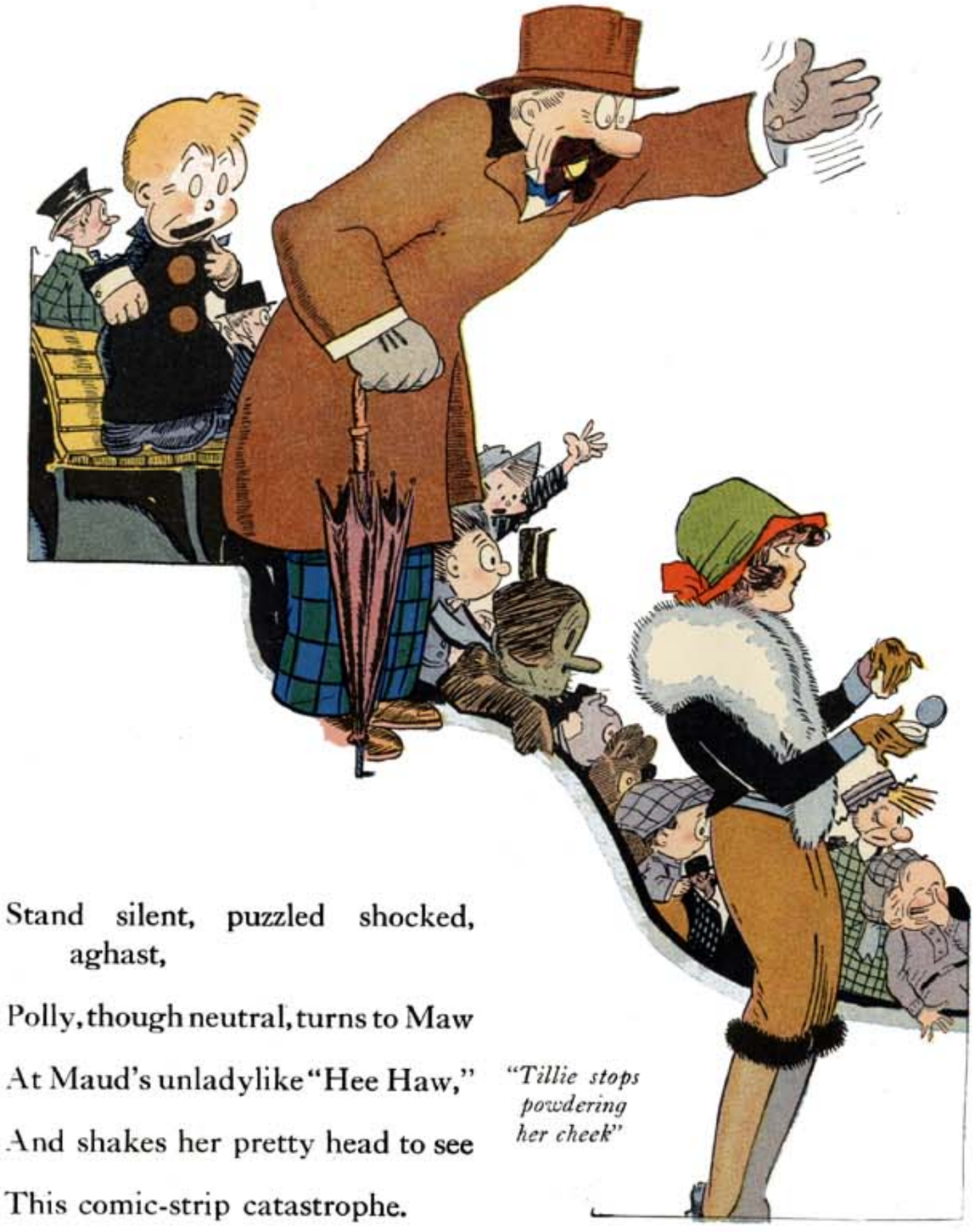
The Maud fans rend the air with joy,

Abe groans to Rheba Mine Gold, "Oy, oy,"

The On Our Block gang, to the last,



"Spark Plug had halted near the post"



"Tillie stops powdering her cheek"

Stand silent, puzzled shocked, aghast,

Polly, though neutral, turns to Maw

At Maud's unladylike "Hee Haw,"

And shakes her pretty head to see

This comic-strip catastrophe.

What of that figure, in a heap,
Is it dead, or does it only sleep?
Can that be Barney, the gallant ace
Who had boasted how he'd win the race?

His features, underneath the brim
Of his funny hat were set and grim,
He sat there, wond'ring what to do.
Then, suddenly he whispered, "GLUE!"

"Abe groans to Rheba Mine Gold"

Like magic, the tragic, pathetic situation

Was switched into a climax, as amidst a great ovation

Old Sparky bounded forward, as though spurred with red-hot metal,

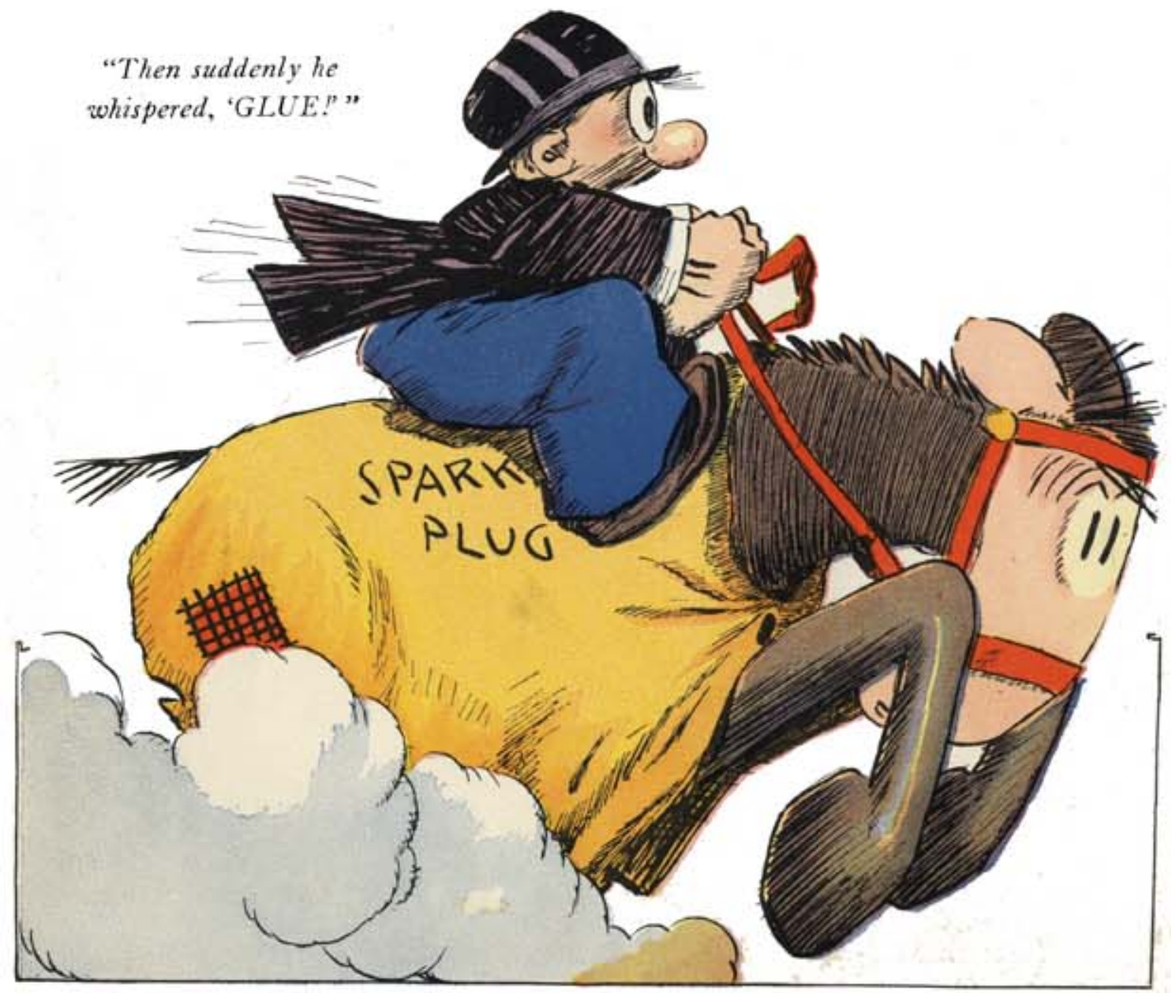
And Barney hadn't half a wink into his seat to settle,

As under him the steed shot forth, ignoring bit and tether,

With all his four famed kidney-feet clear off the track together,

A dozen lengths ahead was Maud, in high, her hoofs apounding,

Close to the rail, waving her tail, the first curve swiftly rounding.

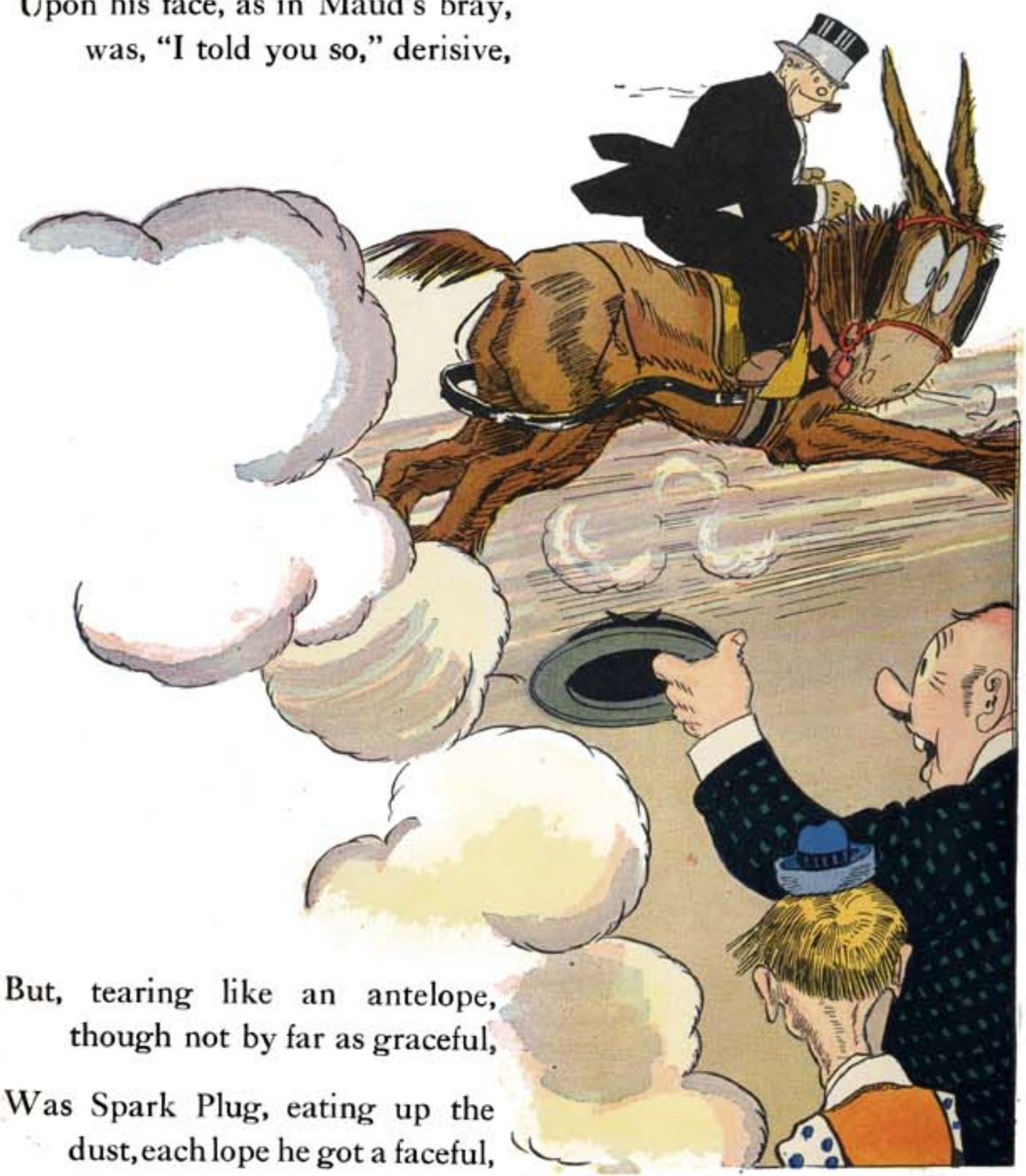


"Then suddenly he whispered, 'GLUE!'"

Jiggs waved his tile, an eighth of a mile was a handicap decisive,

Upon his face, as in Maud's bray, was, "I told you so," derisive,

"A dozen lengths ahead was Maud"



But, tearing like an antelope, though not by far as graceful,

Was Spark Plug, eating up the dust, each lope he got a faceful,

"Barney hanging on"

ened to the quirks of luck and the whims of circumstance.

But when he heard the fateful word "Glue!" —that ignominious doom which he had but barely cheated so many times, all the horsehood in his shaky old frame flew into his limbs; it was truly "Do or die" —or, in his individual case, "Glue or try!"

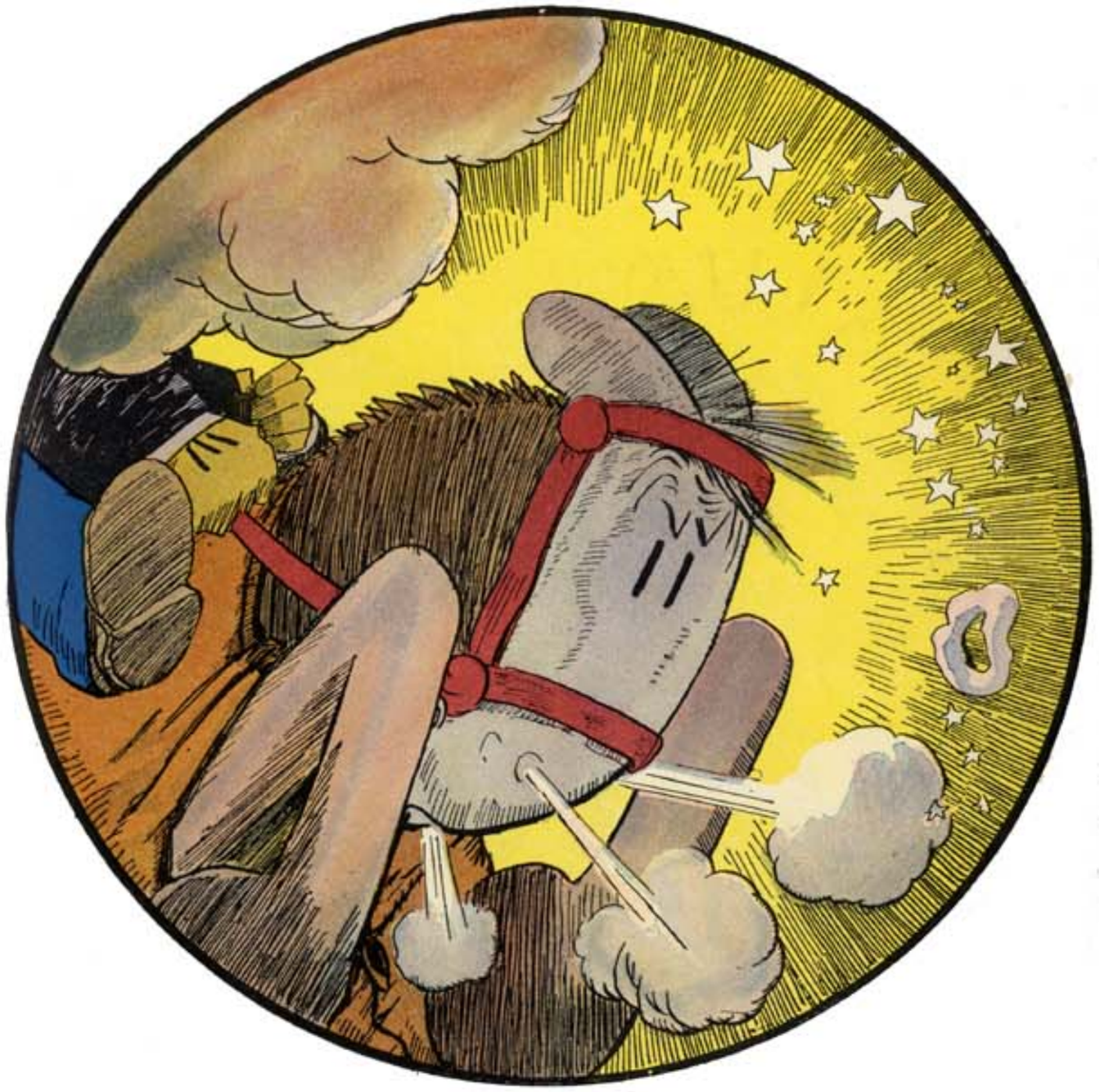
Maud, hearing the sudden uproar, turned her mulish head for the

And Barney, hanging on for life, cried, "Shades of Paavo Nurmi,
I wisht that I was back again, with my feet on terry firmy."

Sparky's nostrils were now spouting flame, like a dragon's. Little cared that weather-worn old steed about Happy's crisis; not much more did he worry about Barney's humiliation, for he and the up-today-and-down-tomorrow Google had been through so many adventures that Sparky was hard-

"I told you so!"

flash of one blinkered and cruel eye. The glance caught the vision of Sparky clumping after her like a scared hippopotamus, with a fine view of the distant horizon between his blanket and his rider, Barney, who was no centaur by as much as a full foot of ozone.



"Sparky's nostrils were spouting flame like a dragon"

"Giddap!" urged Jiggs. "If that four-footed bozo ketches us, you get a p'litical job for the street-cleanin' department, draggin' a rubbish-cart. Remember, the boys are all bettin' on you—shake it up." There was a shower of sparks as Maud's iron-shod heels hit the turf and fire shot from her eyes, too.

Meanwhile in the boxes and through the grand-stand, conflicting emotions crowded and jostled. From numb, dumb despair to frantic delirium of ecstatic enthusiasm flew the spirits of the Hooliganites.

"The fateful word 'Glue!'"

"Maud's glance caught the vision of Sparky"

"Attaboy, Sparky!"

"Whoopee—Barney!"

"Like a scared hippopotamus"

The cries picked up volume. Slim Pickens, a dyed-in-the-wool adherent, seized a megaphone and constituted himself volunteer cheer

leader, calling upon all who were "With Happy, Barney and Sparky" to rise and get together for the big cause:

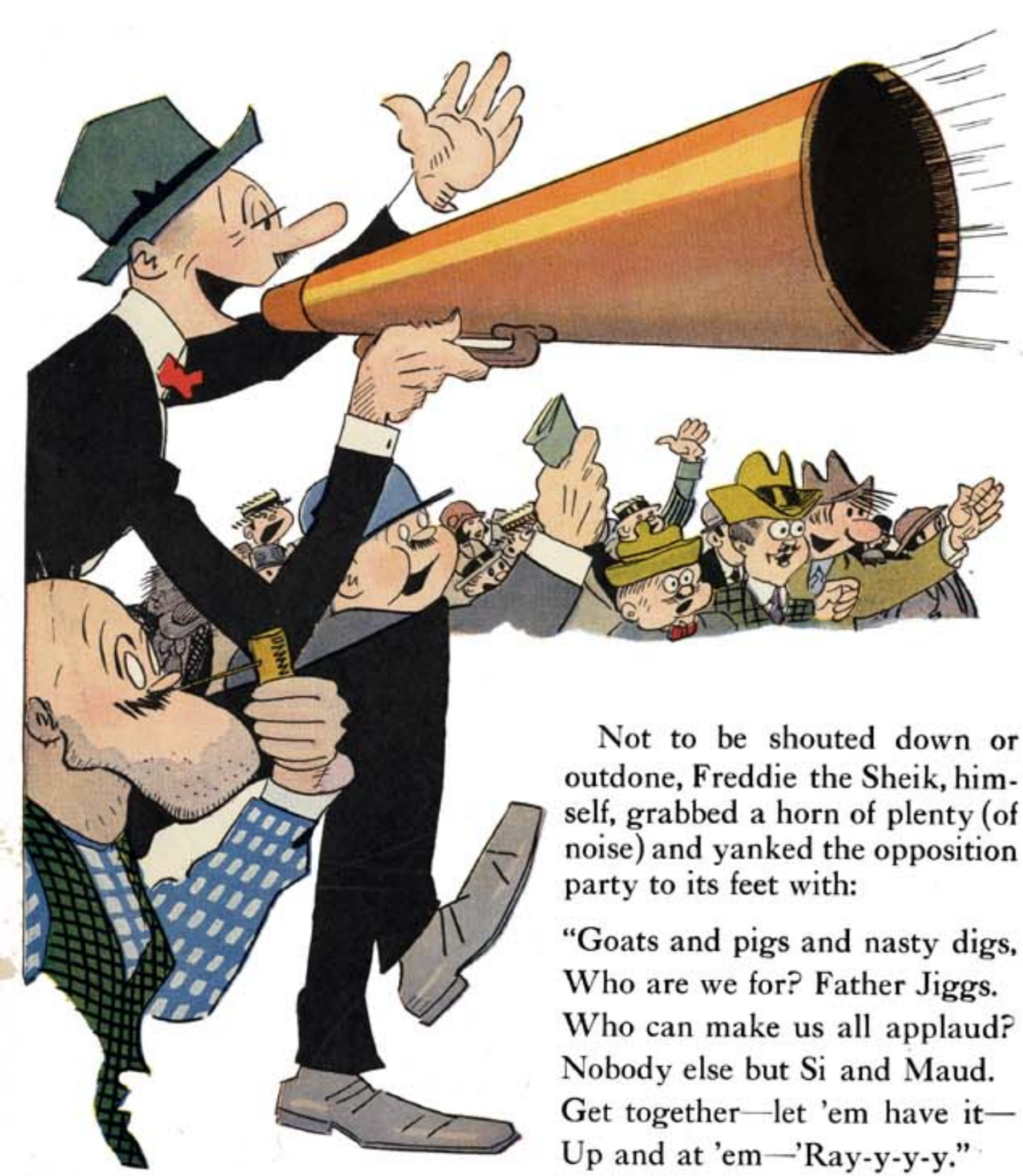
"Ibbidisquibble, for Abe Kabibble,

Giggidisnoogle, for Barney Google,

Arkykanarky, for good ol' Sparky,

Rah-hah-wow!"

"Draggin' a rubbish cart!"



"Rah! Rah! Wow!"

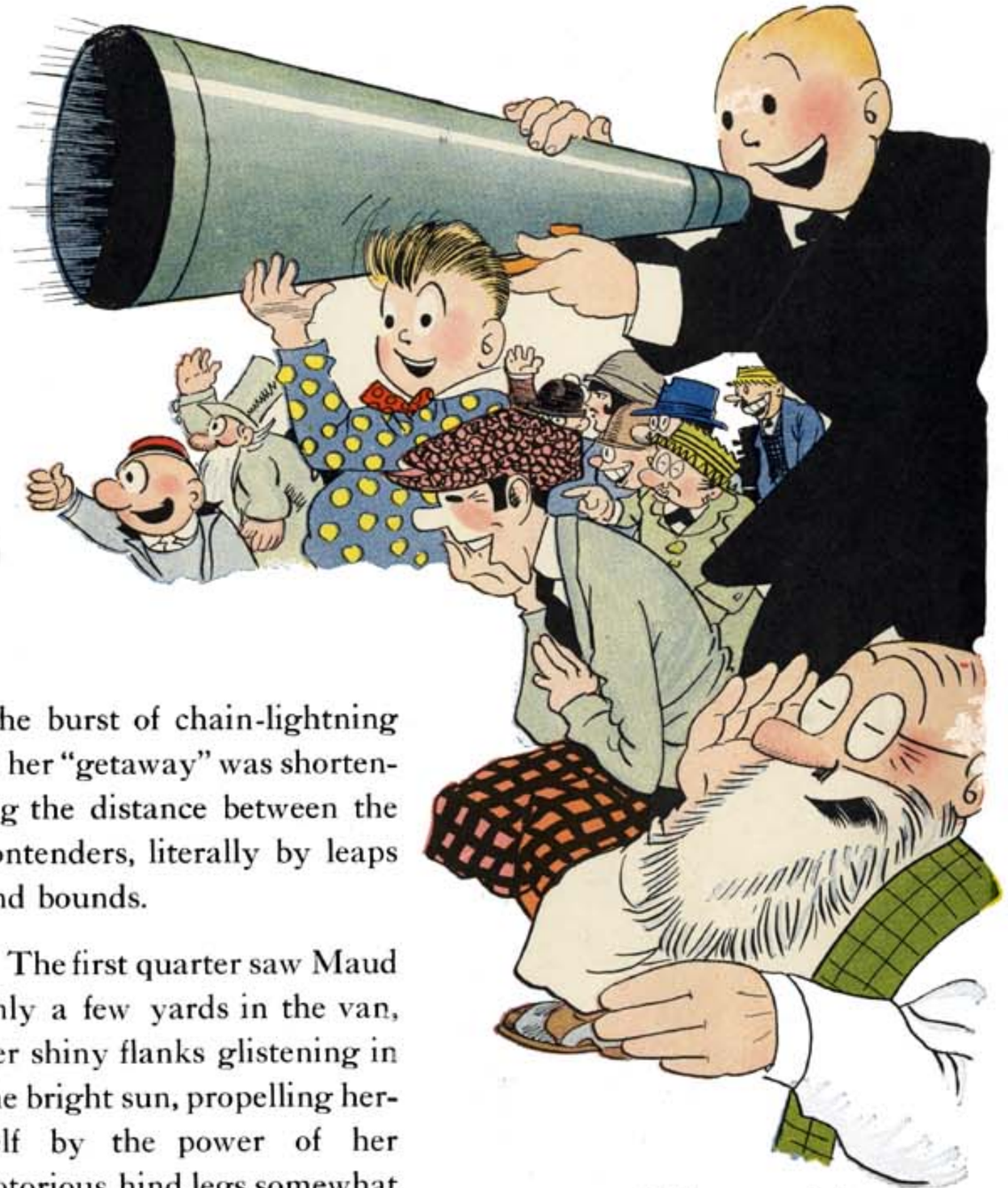
Not to be shouted down or outdone, Freddie the Sheik, himself, grabbed a horn of plenty (of noise) and yanked the opposition party to its feet with:

"Goats and pigs and nasty digs,
Who are we for? Father Jiggs.
Who can make us all applaud?
Nobody else but Si and Maud.
Get together—let 'em have it—
Up and at 'em—'Ray-y-y-y."

Sparky was gaining on Maud.

The burst of chain-lightning in her "getaway" was shortening the distance between the contenders, literally by leaps and bounds.

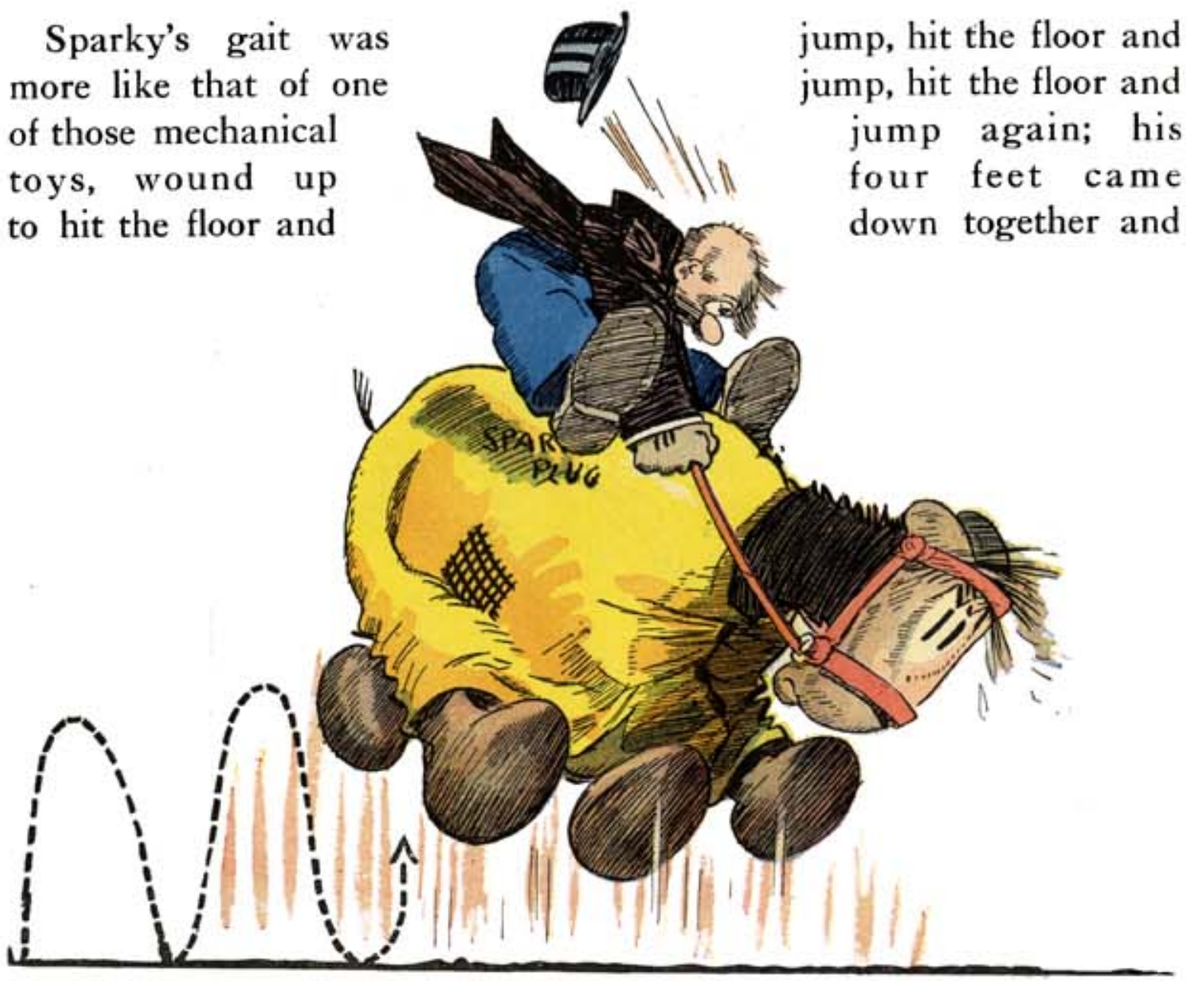
The first quarter saw Maud only a few yards in the van, her shiny flanks glistening in the bright sun, propelling herself by the power of her notorious hind legs somewhat a-la kangaroo.



"Who are we for? For Father Jiggs!"

"Maud only a few yards in the van"

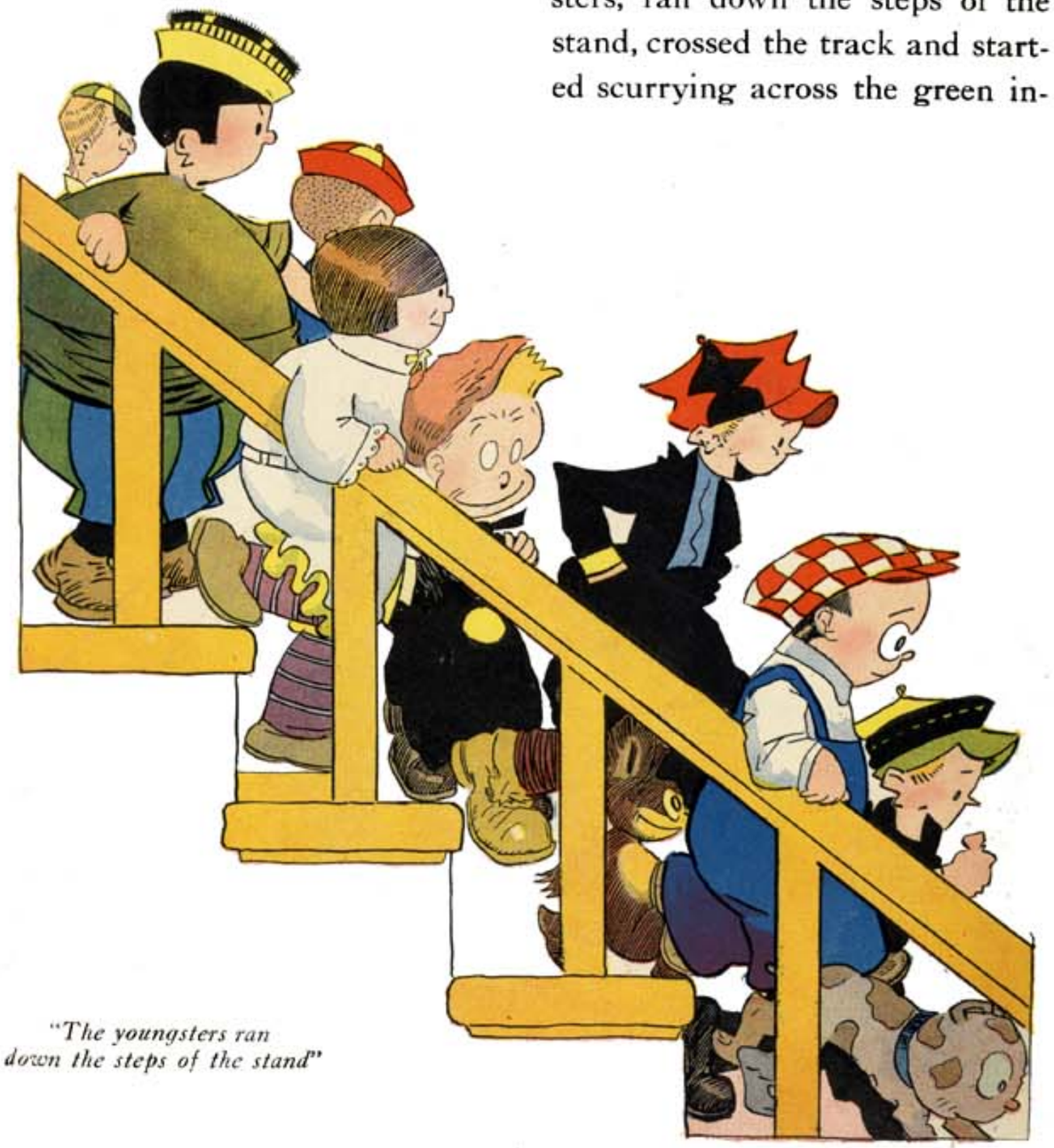
Sparky's gait was more like that of one of those mechanical toys, wound up to hit the floor and jump, hit the floor and jump, hit the floor and jump again; his four feet came down together and



"Like one of those mechanical toys"

went up again together, and every time they came down, Barney came down, and every time they flew up, Barney flew up.

In the excitement, many of the watchers, especially the youngsters, ran down the steps of the stand, crossed the track and started scurrying across the green in-



"The youngsters ran down the steps of the stand"

"Scurrying across the green infield"

field to the other side of the oval to get a better view of Maud and Sparky when they should whizz by at the half mile.

"—all hopped the low rail fence"

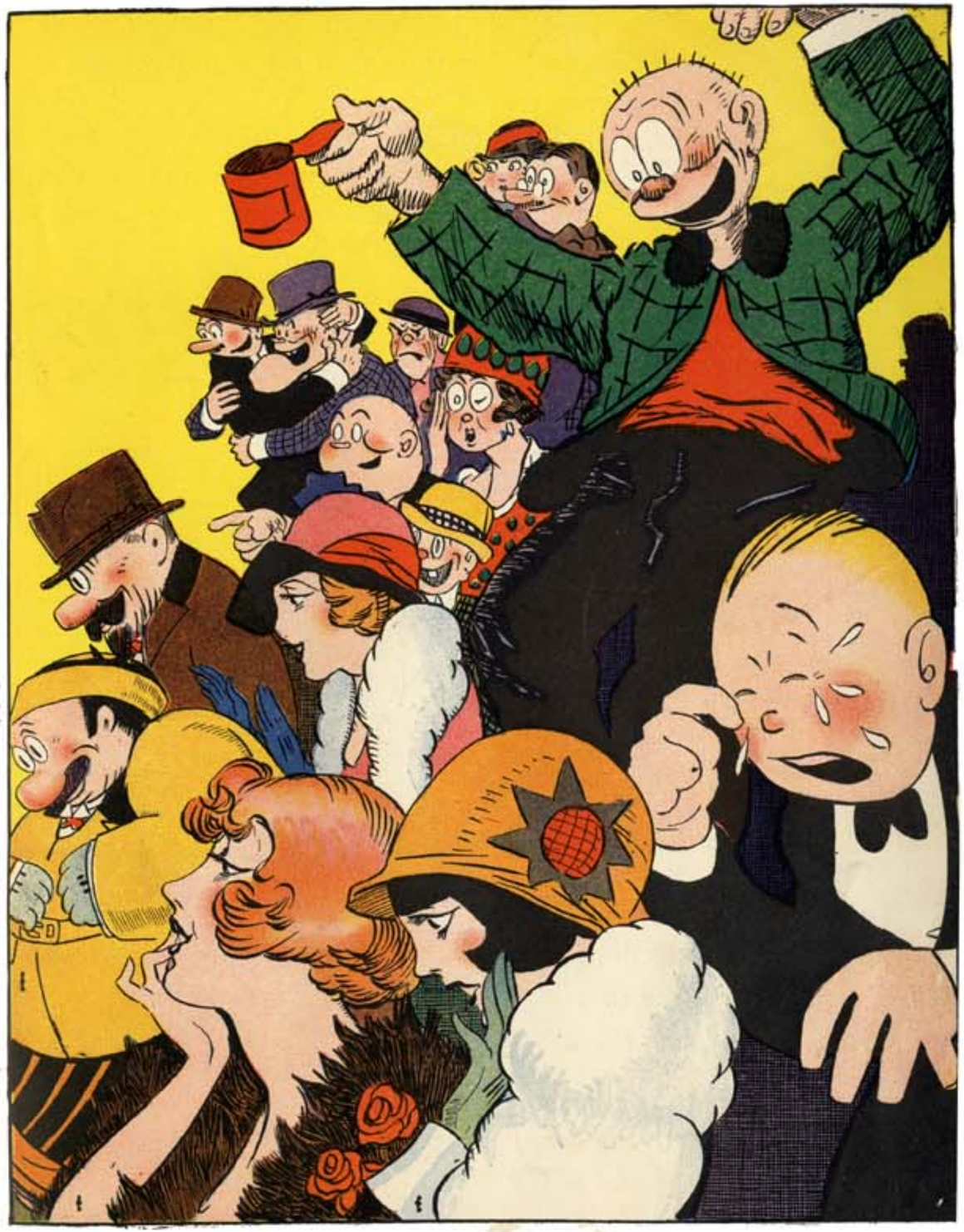
Little Jimmy and his dog, Shrimp Flynn, Skinny Shaner and the rest of the "Our Gang" fellows, Hans and Fritz, the three little Hooligan nephews—all hopped the low rail fence and started over

"Mrs. Jiggs, with lorgnette poised"

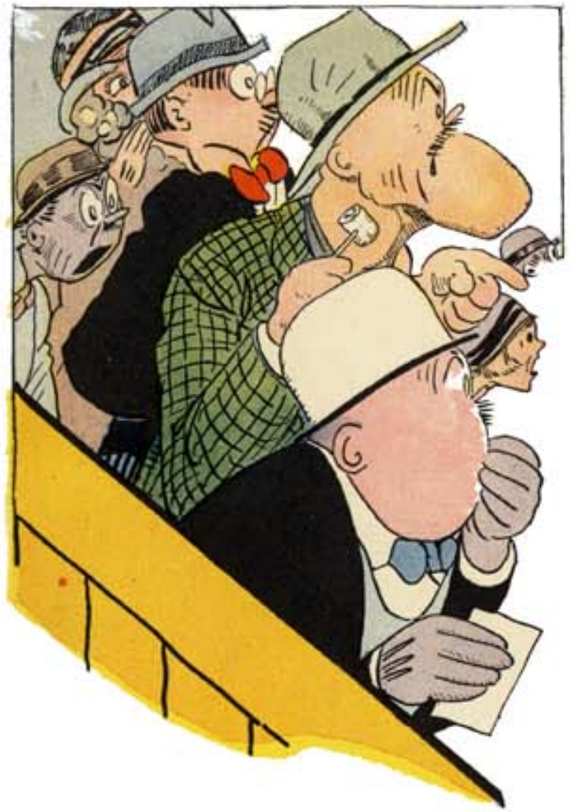
the sward. Sidney, Abe's nephew, skidaddled after them; Krazy Kat and Ignatz Mouse, children in their hearts, scampered along. And, from nowhere, appeared Rudy, the ostrich, legging it for the point of vantage.

With field-glasses, the older and more sedate, but just as excited, followed each step, each fleck of dust thrown back by the straining, plunging beasts.

Mrs. Jiggs, with lorgnette poised on high, turned to observe to her daughter:



"All the thrills of a fierce contest"



"The tension is terrific"

Women giggle and cackle, strong men weep and whack one another on the back. This which was on the point of blowing up in a fiasco has taken on all the thrills of a fierce contest—and three-fourths of it yet to go.

The length of landscape between the speeding demons grows shorter. Maud can now feel the hot breath of Google's mount as it spurts from his distended nostrils.

If Maud lowered her tail in one of the vicious flicks, it would whip Sparky's face.

In the grand-stand the tension is terrific.

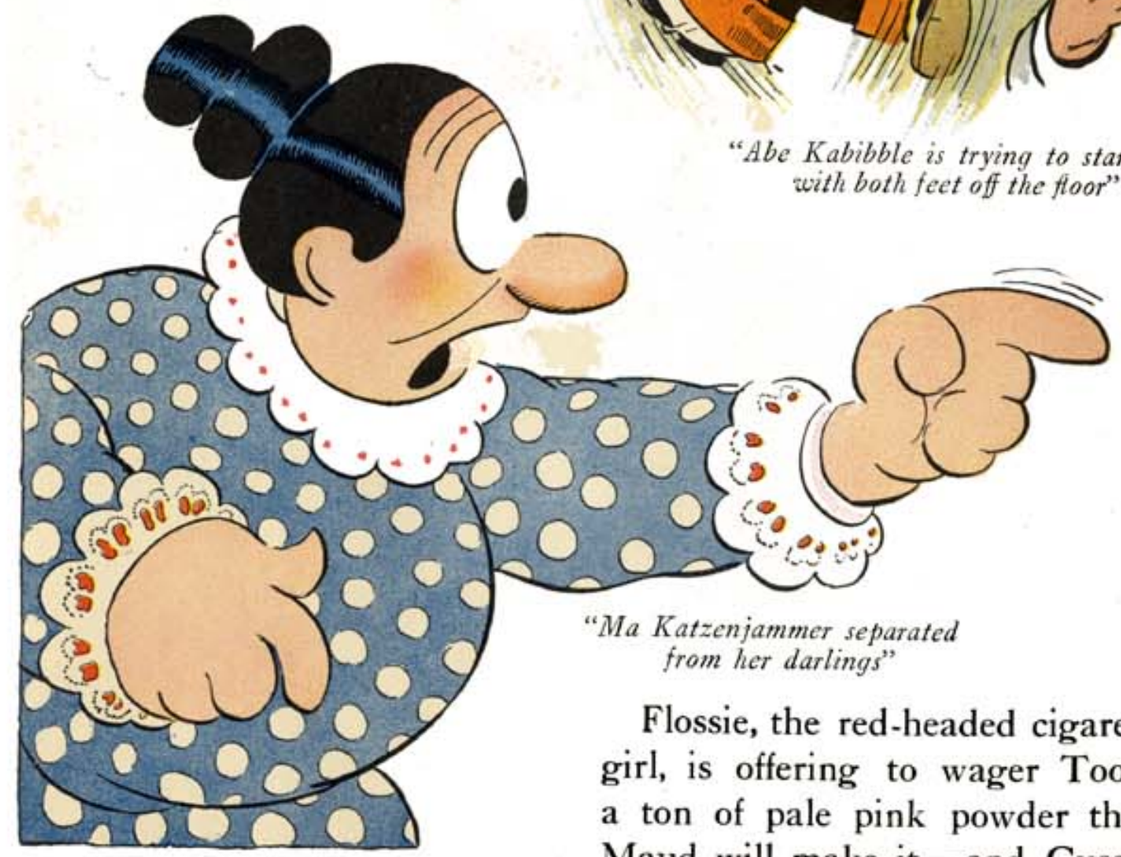
"What a vulgar creacher that there Google guy is—I'd like to sock him with a p'tato-masher."

"Mother!" gurgled the daughter, "What would the Duke say?"

They're at the quarter!

Maud, responding to the urgings of Jiggs, now strains every ounce of mule flesh. But Sparky is gaining.

"Abe Kabibble is trying to stand with both feet off the floor"



"Ma Katzenjammer separated from her darlings"

Flossie, the red-headed cigaret-girl, is offering to wager Toots a ton of pale pink powder that Maud will make it—and Gussie

turns and with one of her deft rejoinders says sweetly:

"Remarkable how you donkeys all stick together."

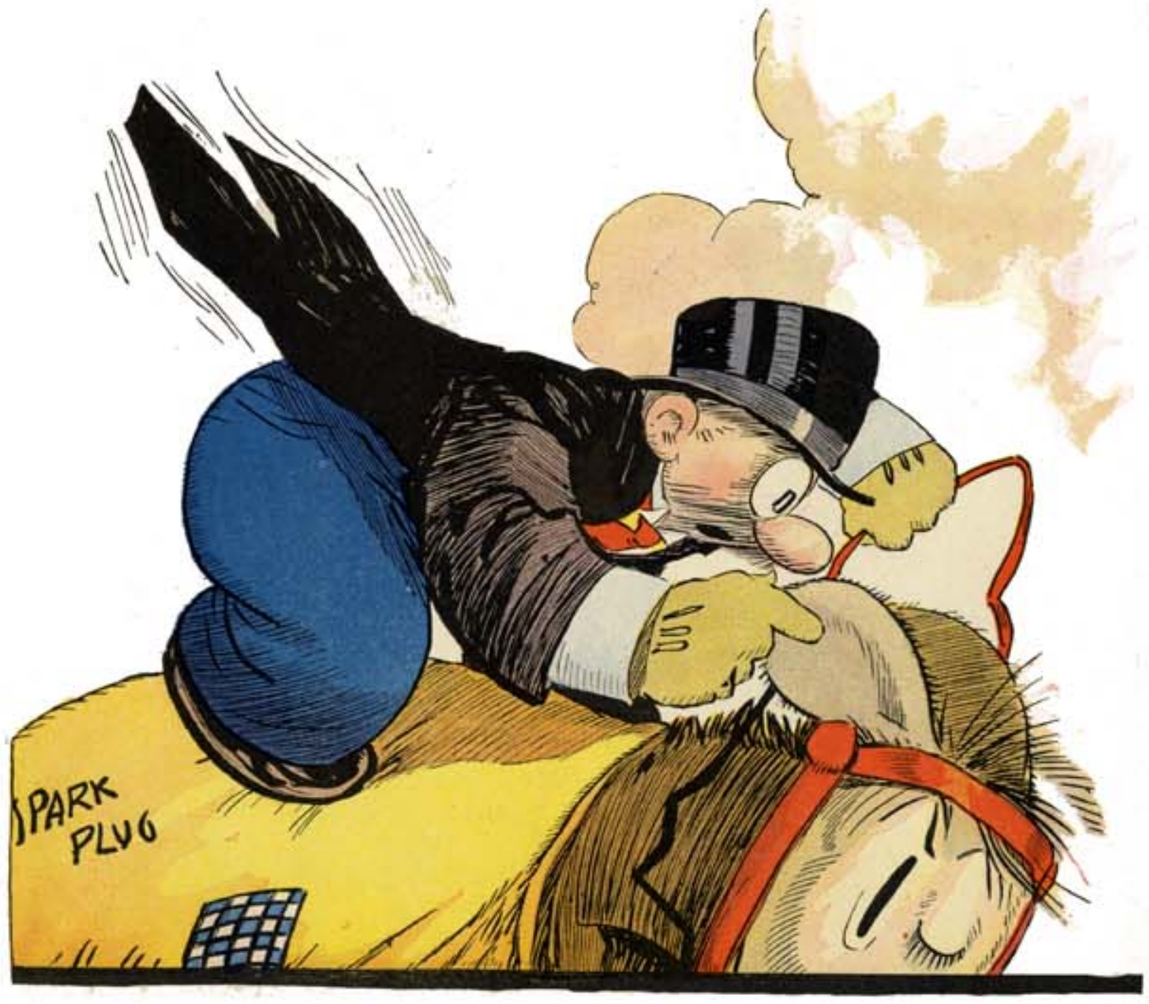
Abe Kabibble is trying to stand with both feet off the floor simultaneously, which cannot be done, even in the Land of Fun.

Ma Katzenjammer, separated from her darlings, who are far away in the green centre of the track, is loudly calling and gesticulating, for she is afraid that the influence of the naughty boys about them might tend to make them mischievous. But no one pays any attention, least of all Hans and Fritz.

Meanwhile the race continues.

Barney, now growing accustomed to the sea-going, storm-tossed gait of Spark Plug, and smelling a chance of victory torn from the jaws of disaster, is speaking softly, purringly to his blanketed star.

"Atta-honey," he croons, "there's papa's brown-eyed baby-lamb.



"Barney is speaking softly"

"Jiggs realized the peril"

Papa loves his horsey. There, there."

But he sees his error at once. Sparky turns, slacks, and acts as though he wants a kiss.

"Giddap, you bag o' bones," roars Barney. "Get your mind on the race. Are you glued to the track?"

That was enough.

With one super-equine forward lunge, Sparky's feet burned up

"By this time they were almost out of sight"

"The followers of this historic fuss popped out their eyes"

"Shoulder" to shoulder!"

Maud gave him all she had, plunging forward with her powerful chest muscles, flinging her body ahead on the front hoofs and the mighty flanks propelling her on her hind shoes.

Glue or no glue, Sparky would have no easy time overtaking Lady Maud.

By this time the horse

"A tremendous shout!"

void and, as the hundreds rent the air with their shrill shrieking, Sparky's nose shot past Maud's tail, and they were side by side, if not neck and neck.

Jiggs, standing high in his stirrups, realized the peril. He tore off his silk hat, and, waving it rapidly about the tips of Maud's laid-back ears, he exhorted the beast to do something—to go somewhere—to crawl if she couldn't walk.

"He was trying to maneuver the horse into the inner position"

and mule were almost out of sight, around the bend of the rail, only the riders and the animals' head-tops showing, as they bobbed.

On their toes now, with binoculars and field-glasses—even opera glasses—on chairs, on tables, the followers of this historic fuss popped out their eyes to see every visible development.

They saw Maud and Sparky swing into the next turn, bringing them again abreast of the stand,

"They saw Maud and Sparky going into the next turn"

though now on the other side of the oval.

And—they were shoulder-to-shoulder!

Maud had the inside, the rail position; Sparky, almost touching her, was on the far side, having made up all he had lost and the added distance of wider curves.

A tremendous shout split the dulcet Summer air.

There they were, side by side, nip and tuck, take your choice.

Approaching the three-quarters, still with no advantage, though each had led by a bare nose for a moment here and there, Google with a sudden bit of generalship, swung Sparky inward, taking a daring aim through the narrow lane between Maud and the rail.

Everyone understood. He was trying

"Jiggs makes a neat leap"

"With eyes fixed on the tape"

to maneuver the horse into the advantageous inner position. Could he do it?

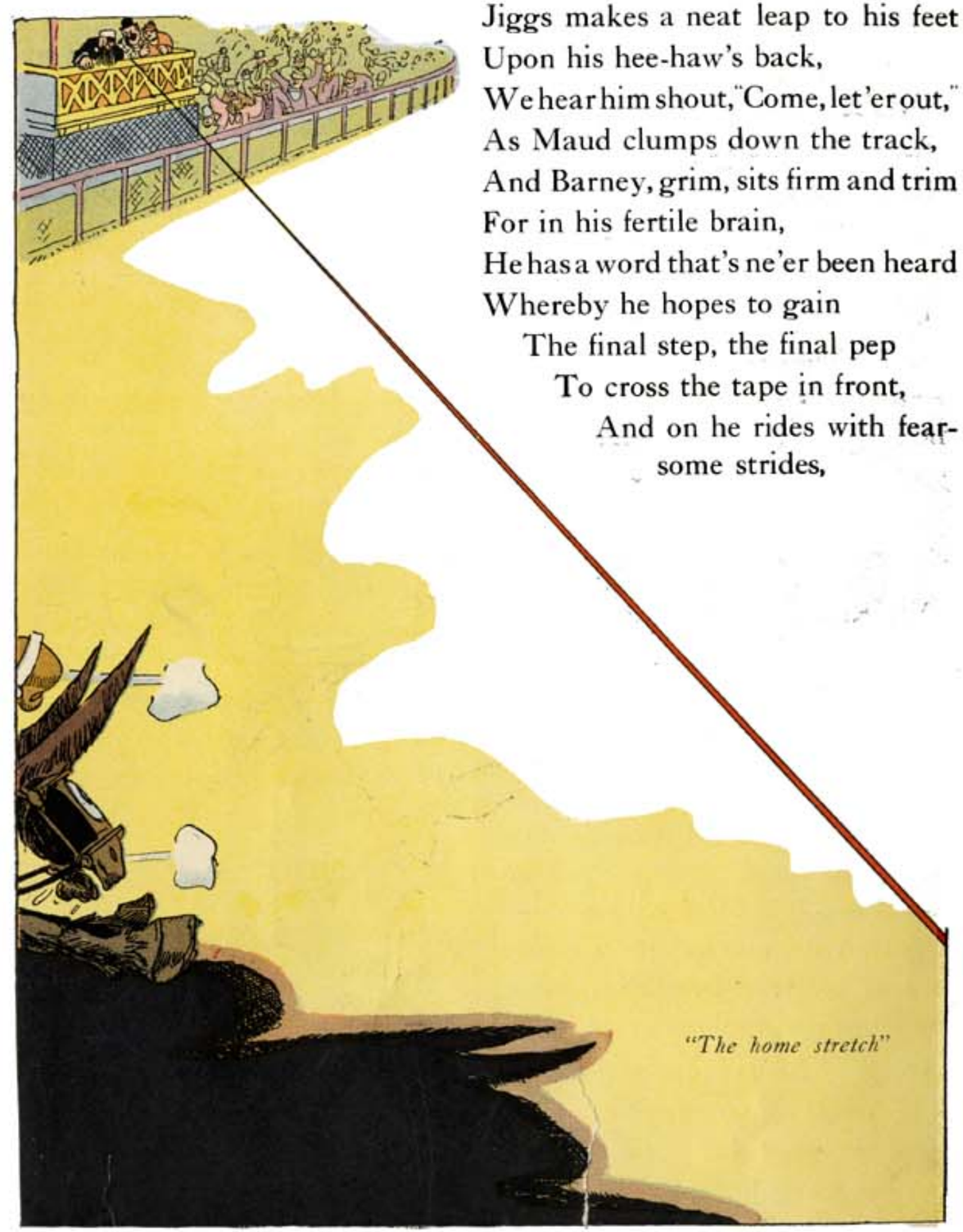
Jiggs, though not a veteran horseman like Google, had seen enough races to understand. He yanked at Maud's left rein. The mule veered in. But—too late. Sparky had crowded in, was on his way, with the shorter turn now in his favor at the bend.

Sparky had lost a little ground, as he had to give Maud her own length to get behind her and around her and beside her. But his head was beside Jiggs' stirrup as he swung into the home stretch.

The home stretch—that climax of all racing dramas, that quarter-mile of delirious anxiety, when man and beast forget caution, reserve, fear, and all but the last ounce in every fibre for the goal, which is now in sight, ahead.

* * *

With whirling swerve they round
the curve
Into the straightaway,
And Barney's slick and nifty trick
Shows how it's going to pay,
For Sparky spurts and deftly skirts
Along the inner rail,
The gap to close; they're nose and
nose,
Yea, they are tail and tail.



Jiggs makes a neat leap to his feet
Upon his hee-haw's back,
We hear him shout, "Come, let 'er out,"
As Maud clumps down the track,
And Barney, grim, sits firm and trim
For in his fertile brain,
He has a word that's ne'er been heard
Whereby he hopes to gain
The final step, the final pep
To cross the tape in front,
And on he rides with fear-
some strides,

"The home stretch"

To your right—
Where our famous folks of the funny jokes
Make a sight
In the crowded stand, as the frantic band,
Blares and brays,
Where the men go mad—girls are just as bad—
In a daze
Of hysteric thrills as the peaceful hills

The shifty little runt.
The judges stand up in the coop
With eyes fixed on the tape,
A moment more will tell the tale
And they are all in shape
To find a verdict by a hair,
For horse and mule are tied
As on they rush the last few yards,
Their noses side by side.

* * *

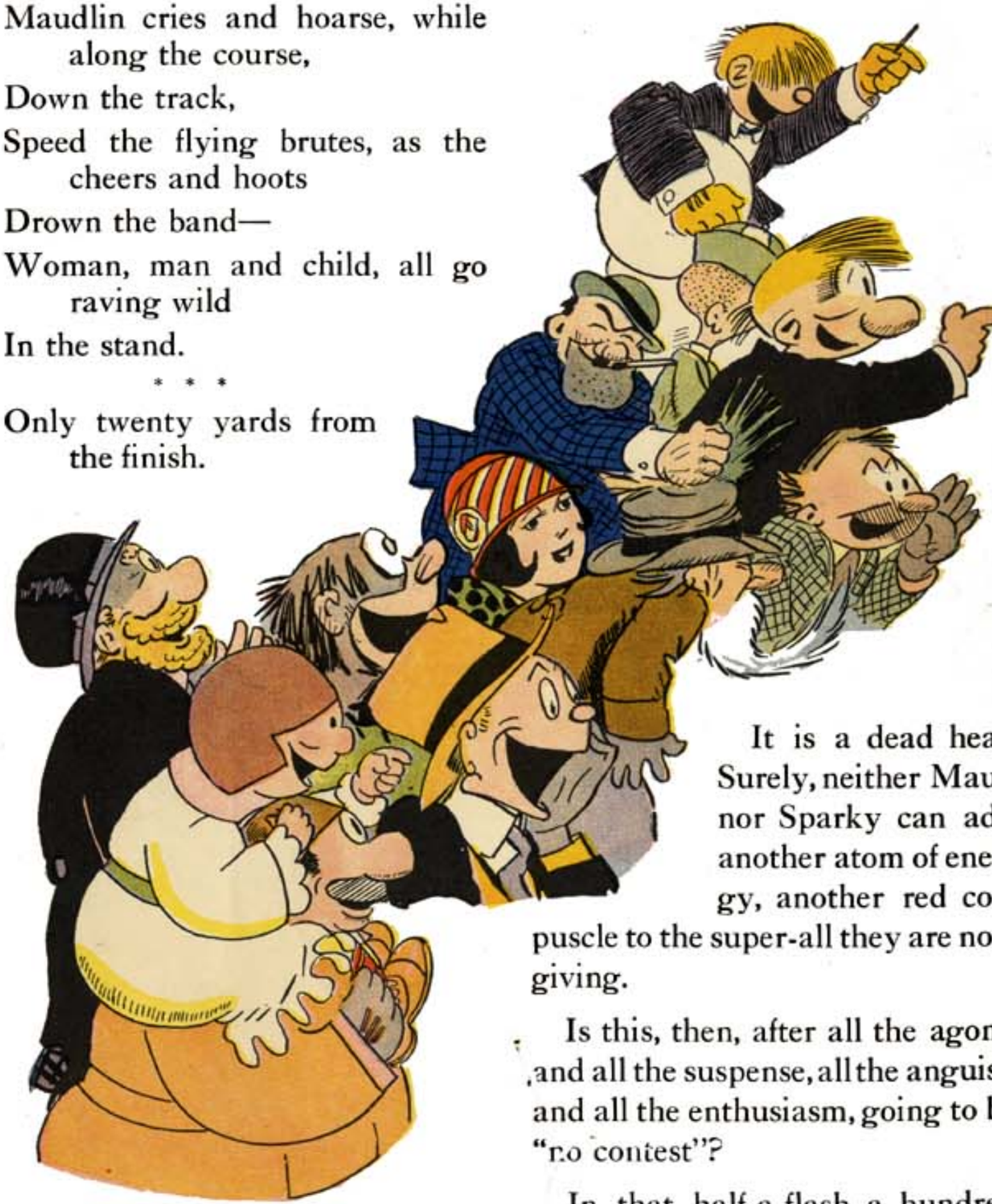
Just have a little look, readers of this book,

"In the frantic stand"

Echo back
Maudlin cries and hoarse, while along the course,
Down the track,
Speed the flying brutes, as the cheers and hoots
Drown the band—
Woman, man and child, all go raving wild
In the stand.

* * *

Only twenty yards from the finish.



"All go raving wild"

It is a dead hea
Surely, neither Mau
nor Sparky can ad
another atom of ene
gy, another red co
puscle to the super-all they are no
giving.

Is this, then, after all the agon
and all the suspense, all the anguis
and all the enthusiasm, going to b
"no contest"?

In that half-a-flash a hundre
people lived a thousand years.

"To command a better view"

There is scarcely time to utter a yip, to raise a frantic hand, to stroke a rabbit's foot again —for, two more steps and it will all be over.

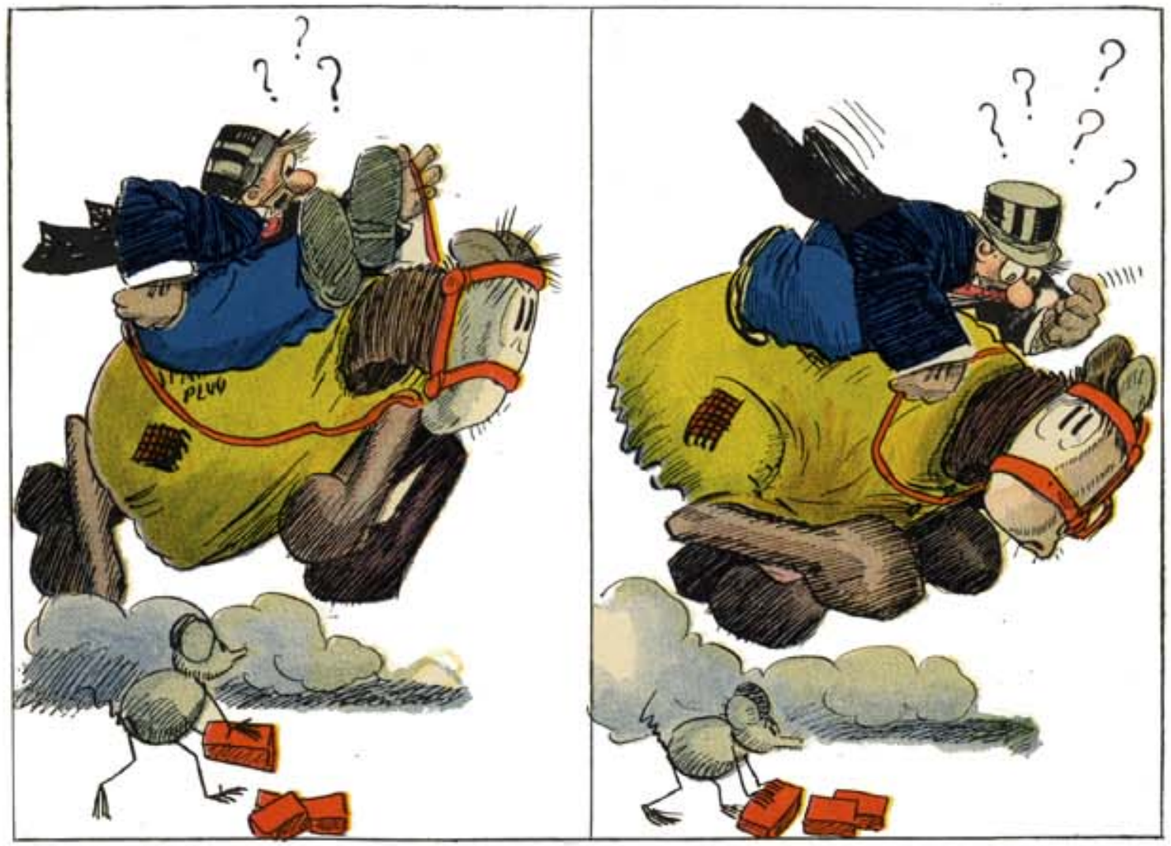
Mrs. Jiggs had started a cheer but it never was finished, and there she sat with her jaws agape, her hat awry, her one hand upraised and seemingly locked into the pose.

Abe Kabibble, pale and haggard, his queer little hat pulled far down upon his ears, held the near hand of Rheba Mine Gold as desperately as though he could squeeze Sparky to victory.

"Tillie the Toiler had thrown her arms about Mac"

Louis, the Life-saver, with his crushing bulk, was leaning on the slender shoulder of Toots, while Casper for once forgot wife and child and stood with both fists clenched on high.

Down the infield, where the youngsters had run to the side nearest the judges' stand, the panic was quite as pronounced. Half a dozen of them jumped on the back of Rudy, the ostrich, to command



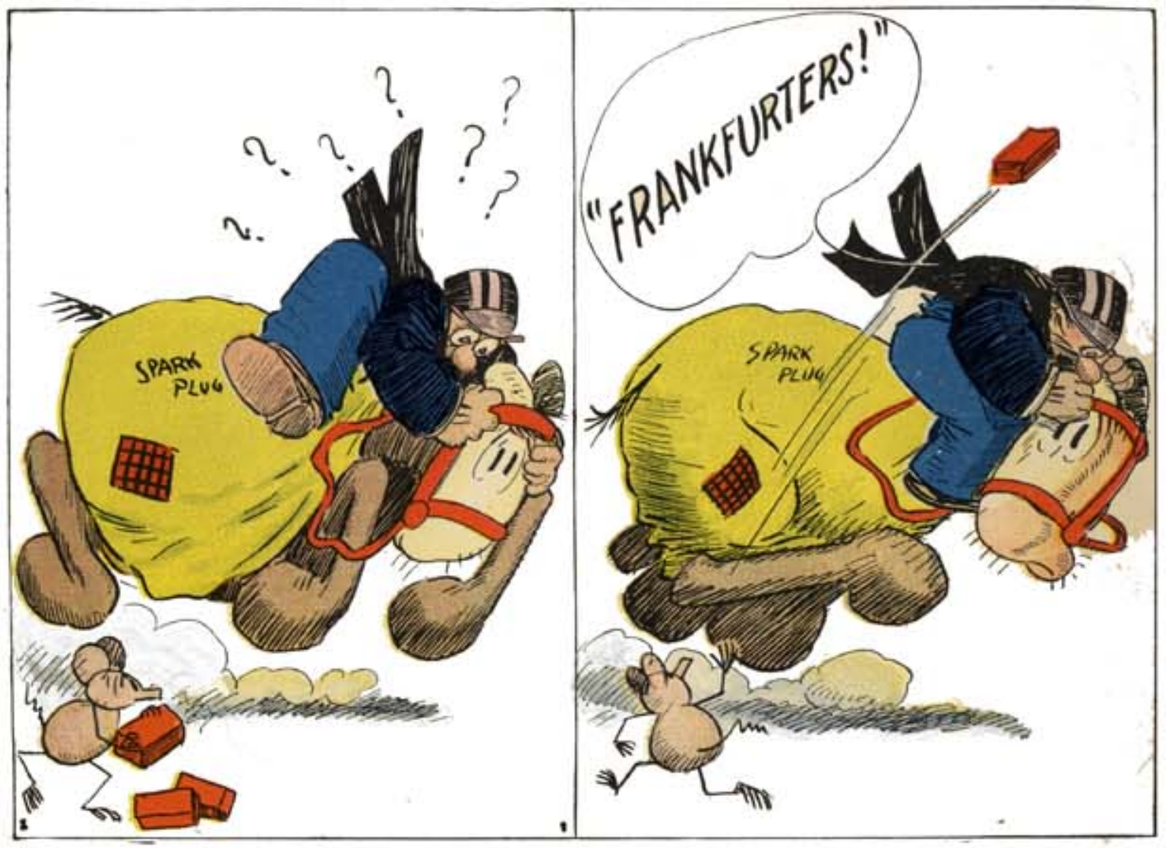
"Barney Google leaning forward where the horse could hear"

a better view, while that unique Google-bird craned his long neck over the rail to have his beak almost within touching distance of his stable-mate, Sparky, who was the nearer beast from where he stood.

Tillie the Toiler so far forgot herself that she had thrown her arms about Mac. At any other time this would have been the great moment of his life. But not now! He didn't even seem to know who was embracing him—nothing mattered but that last lope.

And here it came!

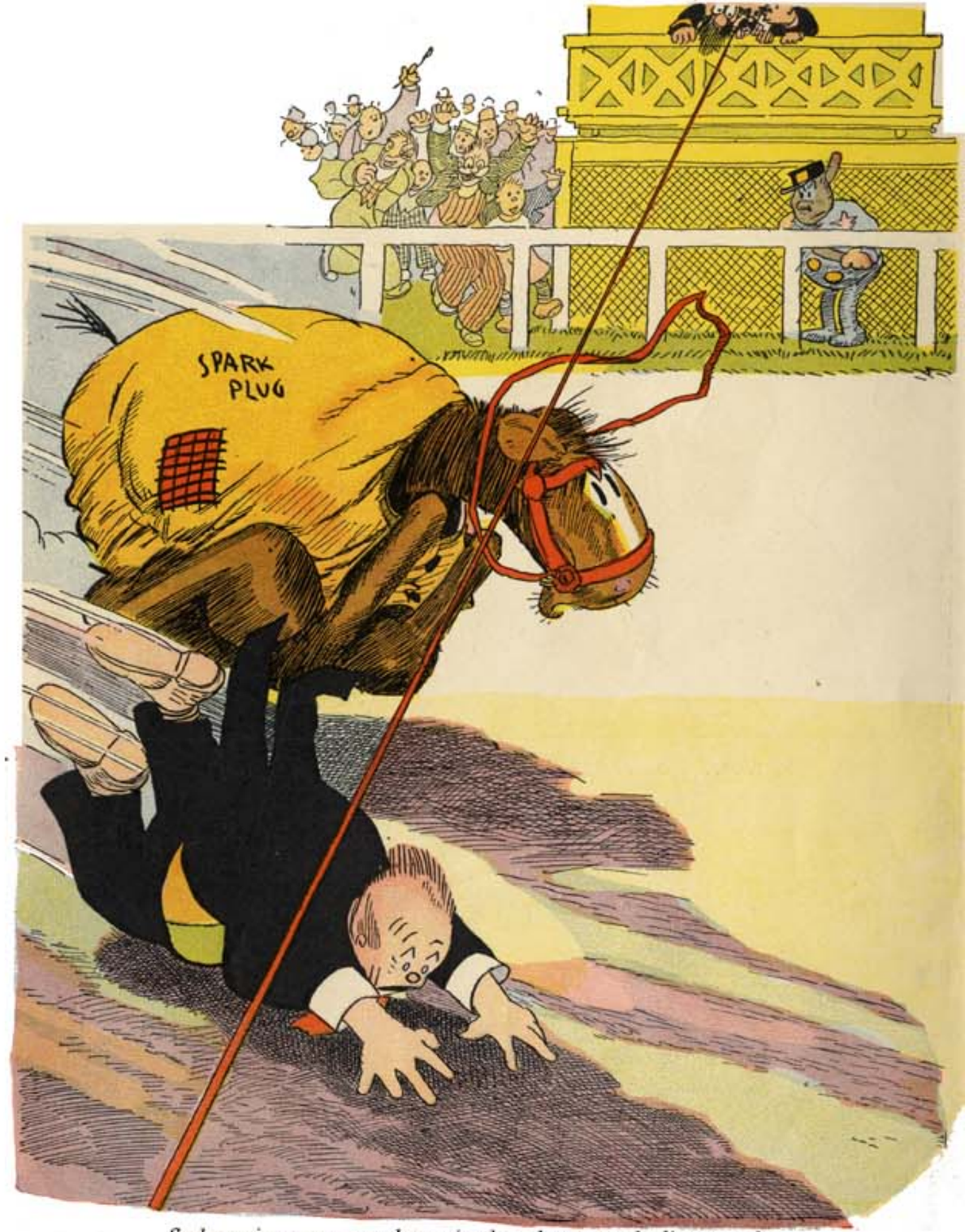
Barney Google, leaning forward,
where the horse could hear,
Cried out with a sudden outburst
in his Spark Plug's ear,
Just one word—of foreign language
—such as ne'er before
Had been uttered, whispered, muttered, in all racing lore.



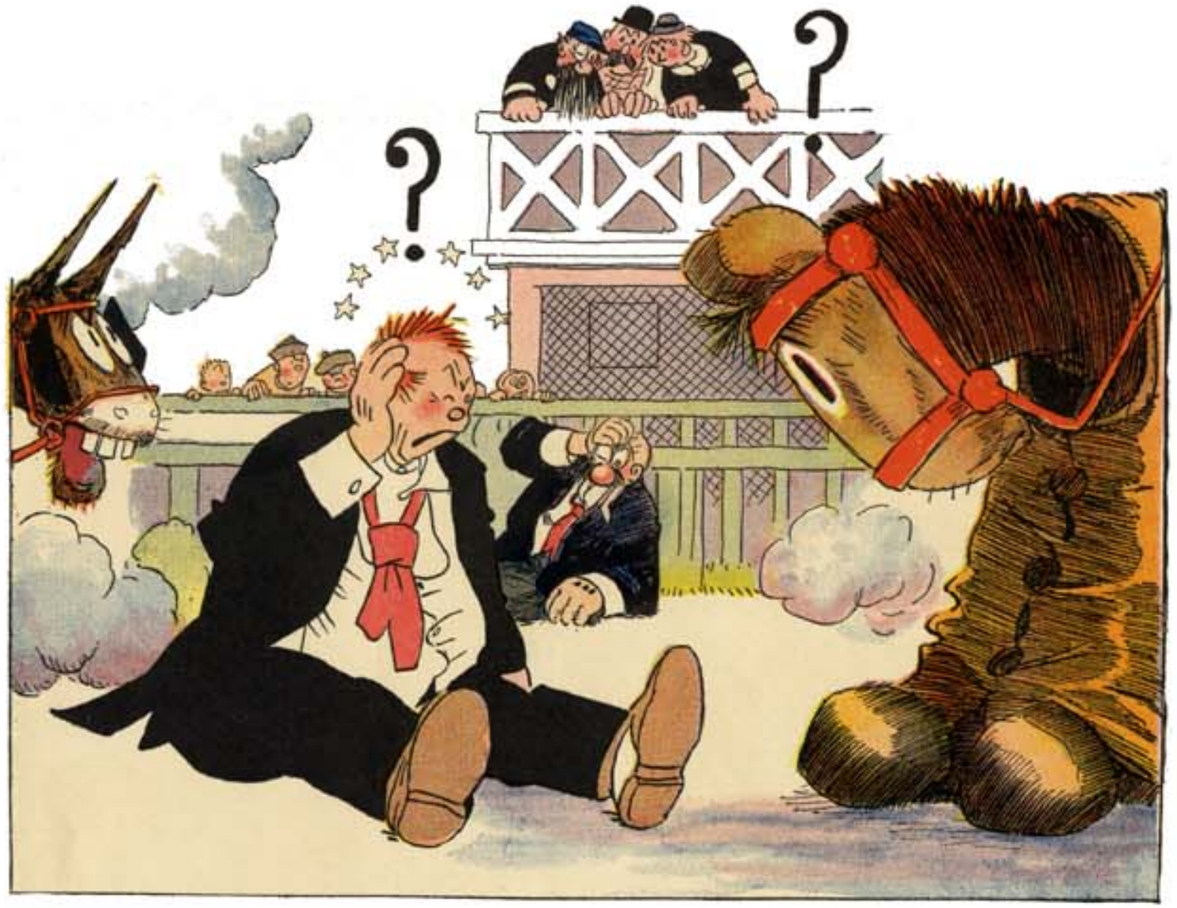
"'Frankfurters!' was what he shouted into Sparky's ear"

Through the silence they all heard
it as it left his throat,
And it sounded as though Google
struck a bugle-note,
From his lips it rang and echoed,
loud and high and clear
"FRANKFURTERS!" was what
he shouted into Sparky's ear.
What was glue, that threat of
terror, as against this blast?
All of Spark Plug's dear forefathers in the tragic past,
Though it was a deadly secret
none would dare repeat,
Had gone to mysterious futures
packed as sausage meat.
With that dread word ringing
stinging, like a cannon-ball
Forward leaped the frantic Sparky
at its gruesome call,
Flung his nose ahead of Maudie's
just in time to clinch
First position at the finish by a
bare half inch!

Barney was thrown backward while Maud was throwing Jiggs forward



So horse in one case and man in the other cross the line together



"Mr. Jiggs and Spark Plug had finished nose and nose!"

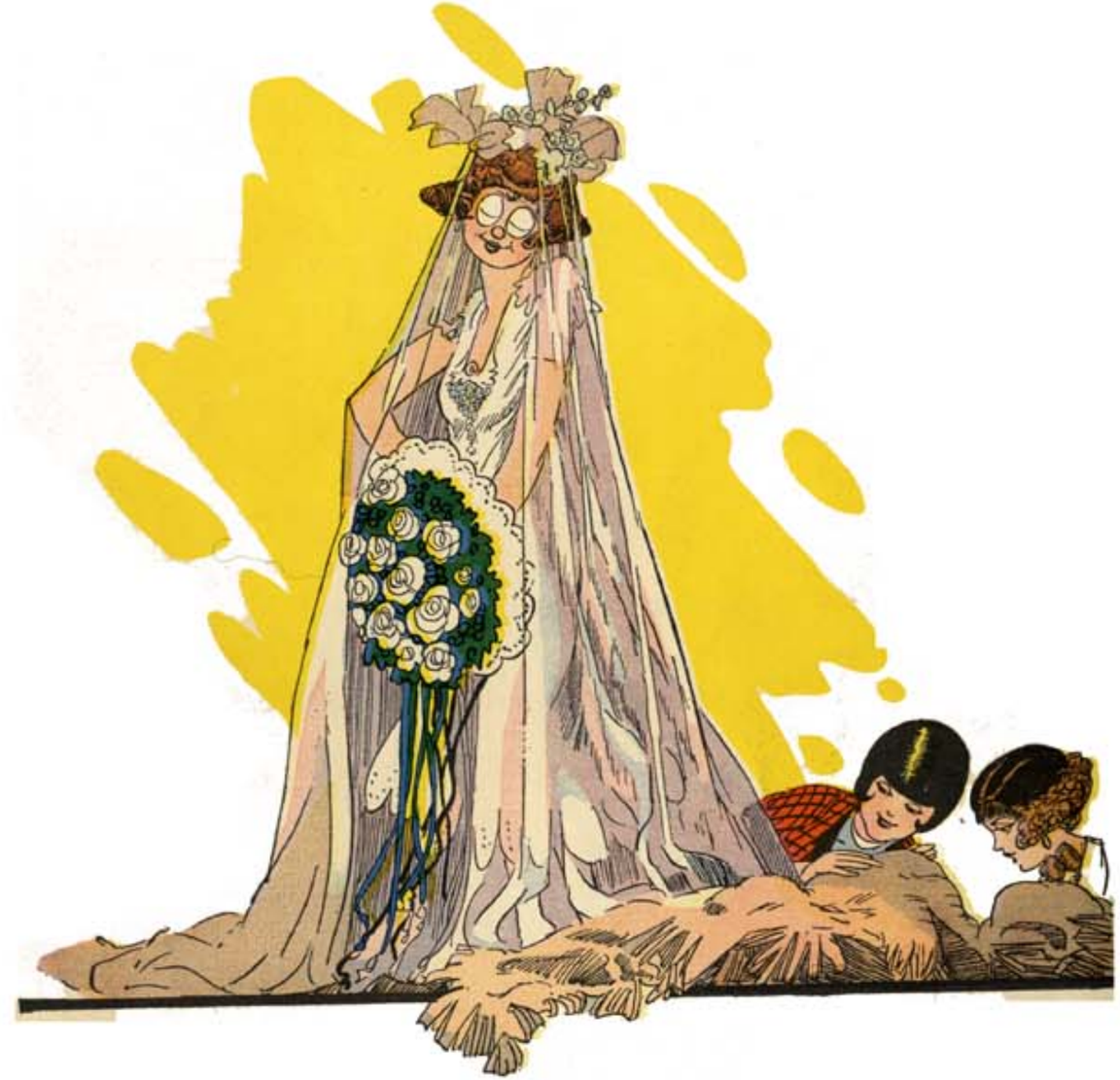
But the great race wasn't over. Maud with dev'lish rage,
Seeing that she was defeated at this eye-lash stage,
Threw her famous back heels upward with a wicked swerve,
Throwing Jiggs above, ahead, in one long, graceful curve,
Missing Google by a hair, and as he sidewise dodged,
He fell off Sparky backward, unseated and dislodged.

The judges in disorder tried to analyze the close
For Mister Jiggs and Spark Plug had finished nose and nose!

* * *

So ended the historic race.

The judges finally decided "All bets off," ruling that whereas Sparky had beaten Maud, Jiggs had beaten Google.

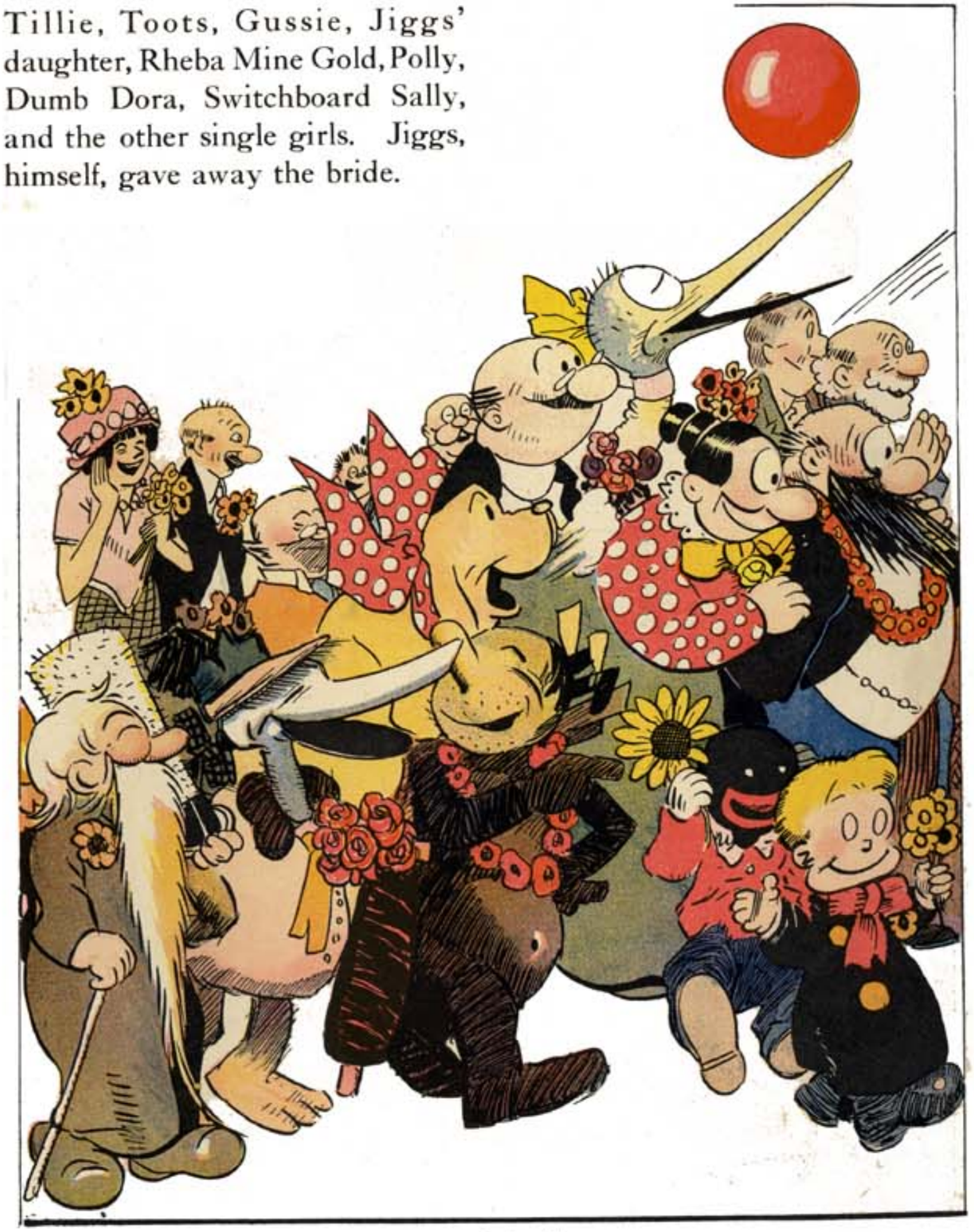


EPILOGUE

(With the Great Wedding)

A petition was circulated in the stand—as soon as the good folk could get their breaths back and their hearts down out of their windpipes—to let Suzanne and Happy culminate their great comic love by marriage, and it was so ordered. Everybody was invited. Freddie the Sheik, himself, was the best man. The bridesmaids were Tillie, Toots, Gussie, Jiggs' daughter, Rheba Mine Gold, Polly, Dumb Dora, Switchboard Sally, and the other single girls. Jiggs, himself, gave away the bride.

"Everybody—



—was invited"

"Jiggs himself gave away the bride"

"The radiant Suzanne"

The train-bearers were the groom's three little nephews, sons of Gloomy Gus, who chirped:

"Uncle Happy's
"Gettin' Married
"To Suzanne."

"The train bearers were the three little sons of Gloomy Gus"

Maud, with a pink ribbon tied on her ears, and Sparky with a nice, new patch on his blanket, marched side by side, friendly enemies.

The Newlyweds beamed, for they understood what bliss would be the portion of the lucky couple.

And, when the radiant Suzanne threw her bridal bouquet, who do you think caught it? Violet!

"Tranquillity, peace and love reigned once more"

So every shadow faded, and tranquillity, peace and love reigned once more, as the band which had played the wedding march struck up, "Hail, Hail!"

With three whooping cheers Happy and the blushing, gushing bride were launched on their honeymoon, and, smiling and carefree, the funny folks returned to their capers in their respective strips.

And they all lived happily ever after, for, after all, happiness is the keynote of the Land of Fun.